



Revivals

RECONSIDERING THE PAST IN THE DECORATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN

Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the ICDAD
International Committee for Museums and Collections of Decorative Arts and Design

Online, 21–23 October 2021





Palácio
Nacional
da Ajuda

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ICOM international
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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME | ONLINE, 21–23 OCTOBER 2021

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21

10:00 NEW YORK / 16:00 PARIS / 24:00 TOKYO

Opening Remarks

SESSION 1

CREATING HISTORY

Lieske Huits

"Modern Ornaments" or "Models of Ancient Production"? Egyptian Revival Jewelry from the Brogden Album

Martina Pall

The Revival of Chivalry in the 19th Century, Using the Example of a Room Stove

Christian Hörack

The Goldsmith Studio Bossard in Lucerne, a Swiss Contribution in the Age of Historicism

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22

8:00 NEW YORK / 14:00 PARIS / 22:00 TOKYO

SESSION 1

MATERIAL

Ludmila Budrina

Russian Tradition of the Artistic Application of Hard Stone ("pietra dura")

Anaïs Alchus & Edouard Papet

Reconsidering an Icon of Revivals: the Life-Size Biscouit Porcelain Statue of Bernard Palissy by Gille Jeune (1860)

Samantha Coleman

The Viennese Enamel Revival Objects in the Medeiros e Almeida Collection

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21

11:30 NEW YORK / 17:30 PARIS / 01:30 TOKYO

SESSION 2

ICDAD GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22

9:30 NEW YORK / 15:30 PARIS / 23:30 TOKYO

SESSION 2

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Virginie Desrante

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory Heritage in the 19th Century: New Thoughts on Néo-Sèvres by Sèvres

Mark Sagona

Baroque Revival Currents in the Decorative Arts in Malta, 1870-1900

Susan Rawles

Home-Making: Nostalgia and The Country House Style

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22

10:45 NEW YORK / 16:45 PARIS / 24:45 TOKYO

SESSION 3

20TH AND 21ST CENTURY REVIVALS

Melinda Farkasdy

Progressive Retrospectivity in Hungarian Ceramics

Kim Mawhinney

Parian Porcelain to Political Power: The Influence of the Belleek Pottery on Contemporary Artists

Christian Roden

A Museum Makes Landfall: The Kungsholm, The American Swedish Historical Museum, and the Rise of Swedish Design in America

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23

8:00 NEW YORK / 14:00 PARIS / 22:00 TOKYO

SESSION 1

NATIONAL ROMANTICISM

Cristina Neiva Correia

Revivals Fit for the King of Portugal: A Pair of Vases with Celebrities of the 15th and 16th centuries, by Sèvres

Ludmila Dementieva

"Encyclopedia" of Styles in the Objects of Russian Artistic Metal from the Collection of State Historical Museum

Anna-Sophie Laug

Rural Revival 1900: Vernacular Aesthetics in European Decorative Arts Between Historicism and Art Nouveau

FOREWORD

ICDAD is a well-established committee of ICOM that brings together a wide array of professionals and institutions from the fields of decorative art and design, encouraging active dialogue and contacts between its members.

The magnificent theme of this conference – “Revivals: Reconsidering the Past in the Decorative Arts and Design” – had to wait an unusually long time before it became a subject of discussion within the ICDAD community. The long-awaited conference was meant to take place in October 2020 at the National Palace of Ajuda in Lisbon, Portugal, but like the rest of the world, our plans were disrupted by Covid-19. In the hope that the crisis would rapidly recede, it was decided to postpone the conference for one year, until October 2021, so that we could meet in Lisbon in person. However, life had other plans. To reduce any risk, it was decided that the event would go ahead virtually instead, and, despite the unfortunate reason for that plan of action, it provided greater accessibility than the usual format.

In the context of this conference, revivals were considered socio-cultural phenomena that have occurred continuously throughout history and which revisit principles and traditions from past times. The idea of revivals was approached through the prism of the decorative arts and design, focusing on how heritage is used, valued and reconsidered from the perspective of artists, designers or society. It was approached with both an unsentimental and sentimental nostalgia, while ways were introduced of dealing with the recent past from different periods in history.

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A marvellous selection of interesting and intriguing papers and presentations were introduced that focused on how heritage is used, valued and reconsidered as a reflection of the present's relationship with the past. In this publication many of them are included.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to all of the speakers for their efforts in bringing material from different countries, periods and approaches together. It is proof of the well-known and deeply held belief in the huge potential of ICDAD as a committee.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the organisers, fellow board members, for making this incredible meeting come to fruition. My very special thanks also to my dear colleague Maria José Tavares, from the National Palace of Ajuda, for her dedication in compiling this volume of proceedings with the help of the copy editor Fernando Montesinos, proofreader Chris Foster and the designer of this publication, Filipe Preto.

The virtual meeting was made possible due to the wonderful support of Wolfsonian-FIU.

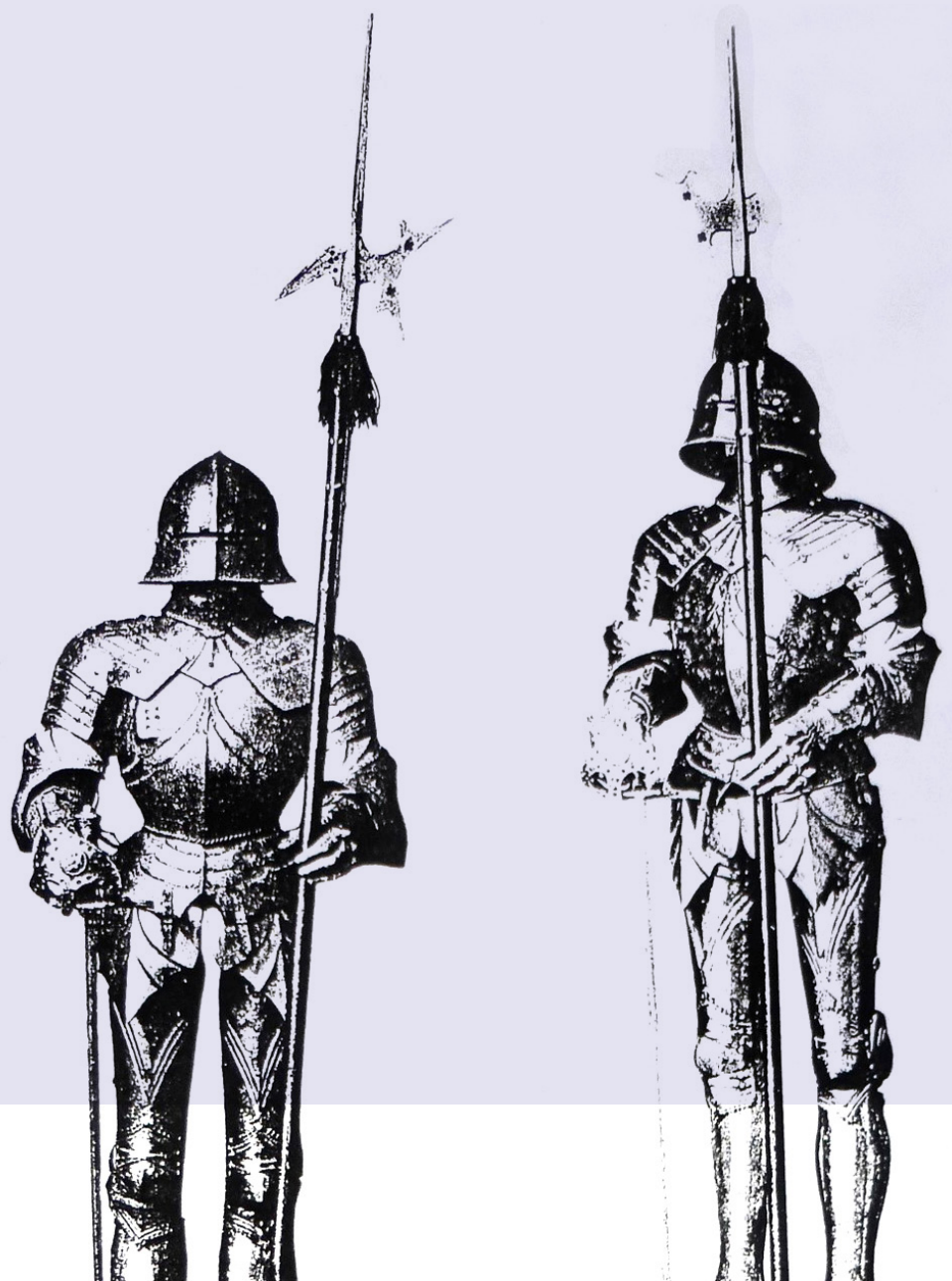
Kai Lobjakas

Chair of ICDAD

The Ilsenburg “Knight Oven”: Design, Models and Comparisons of Cast-Iron Figure Ovens

Mag. Martina Pall

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ABSTRACT

Inspired by the Hohenzollern armory, a resourceful iron caster used one of the suits of armor on display at Sigmaringen Castle, home to the largest collection of arms and armor in Germany at the time, as a template for a coal stove. In 1862, the stove was shown for the first time at the International Exhibition of Industry and Art in London and aroused great interest. The so-called “knight furnace” became a bestseller for the Ilseburg iron foundry in Germany thanks to its unusual shape, which consists of a standing full-size knight. One of the few surviving examples can be found in the private Schell Collection in Graz. This paper examines the great interest that existed about the Middle Ages in the late 19th century based on stoves and other historical design pieces that were mass produced throughout Europe and served to revive and mystify the Middle Ages through the help of modern manufacturing and technology.

The Ilsenburg “Knight Oven”: Design, Models and Comparisons of Cast-Iron Figure Ovens

Martina Pall



Figure 1
Oven from the Schell Collection, Graz.
© Martina Pall



Figure 2
Oven from the Schell Collection, Graz,
after removal of the detachable parts.
© Martina Pall

No matter which book or article about ovens one opens, the knight oven from the foundry in Ilseburg (Germany) will almost certainly be mentioned. In 1862, this stove in the shape of a knight's armour standing on a pedestal (fig. 1, 2), designed by Eduard Schott (1808–1895), the Ilseburg foundry's renowned metallurgical expert, was presented for the first time at the International Exhibition of Industry and Art in London.

Big and representative coal-fired figure stoves were used to heat large rooms in palaces, castles and stately houses. A very well-known example is the Egyptian priestess stove (preserved in the Wrocław Castle Museum) produced by the Lauchhammer foundry.

So-called pedestal stoves pre-dated figure stoves, but the figure itself had nothing to do with the workings of the oven. In figure stoves, the flue passed through the figure and provided a greater surface area for better heat dissipation. They were heated from the back or from the front, and the smoke outlet at the rear was connected to the chimney.

The high price of the knight armour's stove (96 thalers, of which the armour alone cost 65 thalers) limited the number of buyers from the outset. Con-

sequently, very few of these large stoves have survived and, where they have, they usually only exist in parts.

Only the best modellers dared to make such monumental casts. The long-serving metallurgy expert Eduard Schott, working in Ilseburg, was one such example. Schott emphasised the advantages of his figure stove, which was popular at the time, and wrote to the Prussian Ministry of Trade and Industry in 1862 in the hope of obtaining a patent for it. However, the request was refused. In his patent application he highlighted the stove's cheapness, because "all unnecessary iron has been left out"; and the fact that the heated air circulated more quickly. Schott also modelled the Hildesheim Treasure (1869), an ancient Roman silver hoard which was discovered a year earlier. Sixteen pieces of the treasure were refilled after Schott had made plaster models himself in Hildesheim and presented the cast iron pieces at the Vienna Universal Exhibition in 1873. In 1862, he also showed the huge cast-iron panel of the Parthenon frieze at the London International Exhibition, which can also be seen in the Schell Collection in Graz. Schott, as we can see, was a believer in Medieval and Roman revivalism. (fig. 3)

1 Kettner Karin, "Die Kunstgießerei der Ilseburger Hütte", *Der eiserne Harz. Harzer Eisenkunstguss des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 14 (2010): 77.

The Ilsenburg “Knight Oven”: Design, Models and Comparisons of Cast-Iron Figure Ovens

Martina Pall



Figure 3

Mid-19th-century sales catalogue from the Ilsenburg Foundry.

© Martina Pall

His model for the knight's armour came from the immediate vicinity – one of the suits of armour at the Hohenzollern Palace, also known as Sigmaringen Castle. The Hohenzollern family collection includes a remarkable collection of arms and armour, numbering around 3,000 exhibits. It was one of the largest private collections in Europe, dating back to Karl Anton, Prince of Hohenzollern (1811–1885). In 1927, large parts of the collection were sold, many of which were acquired for German museums by a museum consortium in partnership with several banks. Written in the sales catalogue of 1933 are the following words: "... every work bears the stamp of authenticity and quality ... and exudes that reassuring feeling of security that belongs to old museum property, which has withstood the strictest criticism for several generations ..."²

This armour can be found on the Internet as a template for a costume book ("old folk costumes"): a plate armour from the 15th century. The resemblance to the armour on the cast stove is striking. Matthias Reichmann describes it as the field armour of a knight, rather than a mercenary, and dates it to around 1475, based on the helmet, a German sallet (a late medieval type of helmet which arose from the monkhood at the beginning of the 15th century),

the tightly drawn waist, the arrangement of the drawers and the lines of the parts of the individual harness, as well as the ridges on them.³

By a happy coincidence, the author was able to find other models and replicas of this armour. The skilful Munich master craftsman Erich Schmidt started large-scale production of arms and armour in the second half of the 19th century. These pieces were sold all over the world, but unfortunately were very soon regarded as original medieval pieces rather than historical reproductions and replicas. Historicist works by the Erich Schmidt company can be found in almost every museum around the world, from Europe to North and South America, including an almost identical suit of armour to that of the Ilsenburg stove.

In Ilsenburg, this stove is called an "Amsbergscher", named after Herr von Amsberg, who invented the heating system. Philipp August von Amsberg, general director in Braunschweig and Harzburg, provided the design, whose idea came from a purveyor to the court, H. Bellair, Berlin.

At this point in time, the author is aware of 10 ovens of this kind, most of which are currently in Germany.

2 Hugo Helbing, *Kunsthandlung und Kunstversteigerungshaus. Aus Beständen der alten Fürstlich Hohenzollernschen Sammlung Sigmaringen*. Frankfurt am Main: 1933. Auction catalogue, 38.

3 Matthias Reichmann, *Die Harzer Eisenhütte unterm Mägdesprung. Ein Beitrag zum Kunstguss im Nordharz* (Münster: Uni Press Hochschulschriften, 2002), 167.

How did the world react to this original stove?

Otto Buchner’s remarks from 1868, 6 years after the International Exhibition of Industry and Art, read as follows: “At the London exhibition in 1862, the Ilsenburg ironworks exhibited the armour of a knight, just like one you might see in an armoury collection, as a stove. The stove and ash fall are located in the pedestal. The smoke circulates up one leg of the armour and down the other, and finally reaches the chimney through an almost invisible flue. Price: 96 thalers; weight: 4 quintals, 38 pounds. Height to the helmet: 8 feet, 8 inches. 11 feet to the tip of the lance. The armour alone costs 65 thalers.”⁴

At a much later date, in 1958, Thomas Brachert wrote about the stove: “Stoves that were given the shape of a knight in armour, an amusing idea in and of itself, but which clearly shows how much knowledge has been lost about the connections between artistic form and material. Here the tradition of the box shape is broken.”⁵

What were the predecessors of the Ilsenburg knight stove? Where did the figure stove come from?

Other iron ovens, forerunners of the Ilsenburg model, were manufactured in the Lauchhammer foundry as early as 1791 and can still be seen today in the Orangery (1791–1793) of the New Garden in Potsdam. These two female figures, “Flora” and “Vestalin”, are each 3.4 m high, cast in three parts and heated from behind. The interior of the Orangery was

designed by the architect Carl Gotthard Langhanns, who also designed the two figural stoves which were ordered directly from the Lauchhammer foundry for one of the two halls of the building, the so-called “Palm Hall”. These two ovens, restored in 1992–96, are heated electrically today and are still in use. (fig. 4)

Figural ovens were a Lauchhammer specialty, probably inspired by the rural ceramic models made in Austria by the famous modeller Joseph Mattersberger (1758–1825). Examples of larger-than-life-size ceramic stoves with standing women figures can still be found in the Folklore Museum Vienna, among other places.

The stove in the shape of an Egyptian priestess figure in the National Museum in Wrocław (Breslau) is a development of this. Mattersberger, who lived in Breslau in the last 5 years before his death (1825), created this model around 1800 or 1810 from a French Empire-style bronze chandelier.⁶ It has recently been restored and today can be found in the National Museum in Wrocław. (fig. 5)

The priestess is wearing a transparent dress and is apparently naked, except for a belt around her chest and a ribbon, covered in fantasy hieroglyphs, that hangs down to her feet. On her head she is wearing an ornament depicting Horus, the falcon-headed god. This Isis priestess once held a lotus flower in her left hand (now lost). The gold-coloured elements, such as the necklaces, bracelets and flowers, are made of stamped sheet brass that is riveted in place. In a publication on the Breslauer stove and

4 Otto Buchner, *Die zweckmäßigsten und elegantesten Zimmeröfen und Zimmerkamine mit spendender Holz-, Kohlen-, und Torffeuerung* (Weimar: Voigt, 1868).

5 Thomas Brachert, *Der schwäbische Eisenkunstguss: Öfen und Ofenplatten* (Wasseraltingen: Elwert, N G, 1958), 73.

6 Wingolf Lehnemann, *Eisenöfen Entwicklung Form Technik* (München: Callwey, 1984), 31.

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Figure 4.
Oven, Potsdam, Lauchhammer Foundry, 1792.
© Martina Pall



Figure 5.
Egyptian priestess oven, Breslau,
Lauchhammer Foundry, 1810.

the sculptor Mattersberger from 2015, the clothing and headgear are discussed in more detail: “A queen or the wife of a pharaoh and not a priestess ...”⁷

Rather than placed on a fire box, the figure itself is the stove. The oven, grate and ash tray are housed in the long, narrow belt. The drawers in the falling band are each provided with handles. Coal would be deposited at the top and the ash would fall to the bottom. The stove pipe leading to the chimney is at the back.⁸

Another example of a foundry that manufactured figure stoves was the Buderus foundry in Hirzenheim, which was particularly famous for stove manufacture and mainly cast statue stoves (pedestal stoves), examples of which can be seen in the billiards room, tea and lounge room, and family room at Weilburg Castle. These figures are always standing on coal stoves, some of which are round. “The stoves were not only a necessary item for room heating but also an ornament to decorate salons and representative rooms ... they replaced open chimneys and were sometimes set up so that they protruded far into the room.”⁹ Buderus was also able or unable to cast larger-than-life-size hollow, iron figures like leeks.

The Munkacs foundry also cast a figural stove¹⁰ called “The Fiery Woman” in around 1840.

Another Hungarian foundry, in Turjaremete, made a figure stove featuring the naked statue of Hermes sitting on a rock around 1880.

The Prince Metternich ironworks in Plasy (near Pilsen in Bohemia) created the “Lida” figurine oven around 1840. There are additional casts from the 20th century by the Blansko foundry. The stove is warm to the fingertips, depicts St. Notburga with a sickle and can be found in the Vienna Chimney Sweep Museum (fig. 6). Returning to the Ilsenburg knight’s armour oven in the Schell Collection, it was dismantled in the summer of 2019 (fig. 2), and the connections between the individual parts were partially restored and partially supplemented. Some of the parts were attached by wire, but large parts were still screwed or riveted together. Eduard Schrott wrote in 1862 to the Prussian Ministry of Trade and Industry about the advantages and mentioned “... that the particularly conductive parts contain cast nails, the heads of which serve to keep the clay from falling off ...”¹¹

The smoke rises through the legs from the octagonal base, which contains, among other things, a grate. The legs look like two plain stovepipes once their jewellery (trousers) has been removed. The smoke then rises up to the trunk, which has two round inlets for the legs at the bottom, a wall outlet

7 Romuald Nowak, “Lehrer und Künstler: Die Breslauer Schaffenszeit von Joseph Mattersberger”, in *Joseph Mattersberger: Ein klassizistischer Bildhauer im Dienste der Grafen von Einsiedel und der sächsische Eisenkunstguss um 1800*, ed. Gerd-Helge Vogel (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2015), 130.

8 Gritt Hermann, “Joseph Mattersberger und der Eisenguss der Gräflin von Einsiedelschen Hütte in Lauchhammer”, in *Sborník Muzea Blansko* (Blansko: Muzeum Blansko, 2008), 152.

9 Haus Rainer and Hans Sarkowics, *Feuer und Eisen. 275 Jahre Wärme von Buderus* (München, 2006), 38.

10 Sábjan Tibor, L. Kiss Katalin and Lengyel Károly, *Öntöttvas Kályhák* (Budapest, 2006), 91 ff.

11 Karin Kettner, “Die Kunstgießerei der Ilsenburger Hütte”, in *Der Eiserne Harz: Harzer Eisenkunstguss des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Edition Schloss Wernigerode, 2010), 77.

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Figure 6.

Holy Notburga, Buderus Foundry, ca. 1840.

for the smoke at the rear and sealed shoulders. The helmet rests loosely on the body. According to the German Iron Furnace Museum (Neu-Ulm), the helmet seems to have been cemented in place. Since the fold is missing on the collar, an additional plate would have made more sense from a technical point of view, but it seems to have been omitted here. The putty used to seal iron ovens consisted of clay with various additives such as salts or animal blood. The helmet is attached to the front of the breastplate, again with a screw. Everything – the doublet, trousers, arms, hands, etc. – are hung, riveted or screwed

to the trunk or the two smoke pipe legs as ornaments.¹²

The Ilsenburg knight stove is prominently displayed in the Schell Collection exhibition and is one of the highlights of the entire section on artistic iron casting. Whether it is seen as kitsch or a technically sophisticated piece of cultural history is for the visitor to decide. It is a seminal piece from the foundry's history. It may not have been intended but remains a highlight of industrial history because of the few examples that have survived. //

¹² I would like to thank Karin Michelberger and Willi Schrem for this information. Deutsches Eisenofenmuseum.

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The Russian Hard Stone (Pietra Dura) Tradition in the Decorative Arts

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ABSTRACT

The history of the Russian hard stone (*pietra dura*) tradition in the decorative arts is by definition Revivalist, originating at the beginning of the 18th century as a reflection of European court culture. This aspect of the decorative arts, and the perfecting of Russian stonecutting, became one element of Russian national identity in the 19th century. From an artistic point of view, Russian *pietra dura* represented a perfect example of Revivalist styles and forms: Neoclassical, second Rococo, Neo-Renaissance and Japonisme.

However, the Revivalist inspiration is not limited to the past. One very interesting example is the application of three-dimensional mosaic in sculpture. This remarkable technique was invented at the Medici court workshops between the end of the 16th and middle of the 17th century. Revived in the last quarter of the 19th century by the Florentine artists of the Opificio dell *pietra dura*, it arrived in Russia through the artists working for the famous Carl Fabergé company. In the 1900s–1910s, roughly one hundred items representing Russian allegorical figures were created by Fabergé and his rival Denissoff-Ouralsky. Curiously, this very complex and expensive technique survived into the Soviet age. This significant form of interior decoration was revived again at the end of the 1990s under different economic circumstances. The private collections were new, but the images were traditional: stonecutters reproduced the Russian Fabergé styles and interpreted Russian history. Between 1995 and the present day, hundreds of pieces of this kind have been produced by artisans in the Urals. While some mirror Faberge pieces, others reveal a more dynamic, elaborate and complex development of decorative interior stone sculpture.

The Russian Hard Stone (Pietra Dura) Tradition in the Decorative Arts

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Historically, the Russian hard stone tradition (*pietra dura*) in the decorative arts is by definition Revivalist, originating at the beginning of the 18th century as a reflection of European court culture. Following his 1717 visit to France, the Russian Emperor Peter I (1672–1725) decided to establish centers of hard stone production following mineralogical exploration in the Urals and Siberia. The first to be founded was the Imperial Peterhof Lapidary Factory (1721), which was followed by a similar imperial establishment in Ekaterinburg (1751) and later by the Kolyvan Lapidary Factory (1785). The Peterhof workshop, following European court tradition, was located in close proximity to the main imperial summer residence. Curiously, the other two—in the Urals (Ekaterinburg) and the Altaï mountains (Kolyvan)—were established after the discovery of large deposits of decorative stone.

As a consequence, by the end of the 18th century, Russia had its own important production of *pietra dura* based on a large range of specific decorative

stones: rhodonite, pegmatite, amazonite, quartzite and aventurine, lapis, malachite, and dozens of varieties of jasper of different colors and patterns. All sorts of interior decorations, such as tabletops, vases, tazzas, and furniture, were created by masters in the three imperial workshops following models created by court architects. A large number of these treasures left Russia as diplomatic gifts.¹

Unsurprisingly, most hard stone pieces produced in the 19th century by the imperial and private workshops followed the most fashionable European models in a variety of Revivalist styles and forms: Neoclassical, second Rococo, neo-Renaissance, neo-Turkish and Japonisme.

Neoclassical forms were highly appreciated by the Russian court in the first third of the 19th century. Directly inspired by the prints of Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, and Charles Percier, vases and tazzas became very popular. One of the best examples was the square-shaped tazza, executed in all types of stone and on a large

¹ Ludmila A. Budrina, *Malakhitovaia diplomatiia (Malachite's diplomacy)* (Moscow–Ekaterinburg, 2020).

scale.² Other interpretations of antique forms were sometimes inspired by direct copies in marble of bronze pieces from museums in Rome. A vase in the Hermitage Museum collection (fig. 1) from the Ekaterinburg Imperial Lapidary Factory—a jasper reproduction (1846–1850) of a bronze vase from the Musei Capitolini in Rome—provides an interesting example of this practice.³

During the second Rococo, colored stone production was the privilege of private establishments, particularly the Demidoff Malachite Factory, whose guéridons, chairs and armchairs, vases, and chimneypieces were inspired by French 18th-century furniture and interior decoration.⁴

Russian lapidaries also produced examples of this extraordinary art form in “exotic” styles. In the

1870s, the Kolyvan Imperial Lapidary Factory executed two jasper vases modeled on a Persian-style silver enamel vase designed and published by the French artist Léon Feuchère (1804–57) in the 1840s.⁵ The influence of Japonisme on the output of the Peterhof Imperial Lapidary Factory in the 1890s can be seen in a significant number of works, including dressing table accessories in rhodonite and agate.⁶

In the second half of the 19th century, hard stone objects in the neo-Renaissance style became very popular within the Russian court. Interest in all kinds of stone mosaic inspired the production of small “berry” paperweights, one of the most popular pieces made in the Urals and directly inspired by Florentine and Gobelins relief mosaics.⁷ The most important interpretations of Renaissance stone-decorated furniture were produced by the

2 Ludmila A. Budrina, “Kvadratnaia chasha iz kollekzii guessenskogo doma. K istorii rannego russkogo malakhita” (“Squared Tazza from the Hessen House Collection. On the History of Early Russian Malachite”), *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedeniye* (Tomsk State University Journal of Cultural Studies and Art History), no. 37 (2020), 175–183, doi: 10.17223/2220836/37/18.

3 Natalia M. Mavrodina, *Iskusstvo russkikh kamnerezov XVIII–XIX vekov. Katalog kollekzii Gosudarstvennogo Ermitaga* (The Art of Russian Stonecutters in the 18th and 19th centuries. Catalogue of the State Hermitage Museum Collection) (Saint Petersburg, 2007), 544.

4 Ludmila A. Budrina, “La produzione in malachite dei Demidov, sulle tracce degli oggetti alla prima esposizione universale,” in *I Demidoff fra Russia e Italia. Gusto e prestigio di una famiglia in Europa dal XVIII al XX secolo*, ed. Lucia Tonini (Florence, Leo S. Olschki, 2013), 151–176.

5 Ludmila A. Budrina, “Atribuzia rabot russkikh kamnereznykh” (“The Attribution of Works by Russian Stonecutting Factories: Object, Design, and Issues of Authorship in the Context of Cross-Cultural Exchanges”), *Izvestia Ural'skogo Federal'nogo Universiteta. Seria 2 Gumanitarnye nauki* (Izvestia Ural Federal University Journal Series 2 Humanities and Arts), vol. 19, issue 4 (169), (2017), 231–240, doi 10.15826/izv2.2017.19.4.076

6 Sergey E. Vinokurov and Ludmila A. Budrina, *Dal'nevostochnaya mekhta evropeyskikh masterov* (The Far Eastern Dream of European Craftsmen) (Saint Petersburg, 2021), 110–113.

7 Ludmila A. Budrina, “Zabytye imena uralskikh kamnerezov: Ivan Sergeevich Stebakov” (“Forgotten Names of Ural Stonecutters: Ivan Sergeevich Stebakov”), *Izvestia Ural'skogo Federal'nogo Universiteta. Seria 2 Gumanitarnye nauki* (Izvestia Ural Federal University Journal Series 2 Humanities and Arts), issue 2 (127), (2014), 176–180.

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Fig. 1

Jasper vase (1846–1850).

Ekaterinburg Imperial Lapidary Factory.

Saint Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum.

Photo by the author.

Peterhof Factory. These could range from beautiful tabletops enriched with colored stone bouquets to significant 17th-century-style cabinets decorated with mosaic reliefs (fig. 2).⁸

Certainly one of the most fascinating manifestations of this interest in the neo-Renaissance was the use of the Florentine technique of three-dimensional mosaic. In 1590–1598, artists from the Grand Ducal court workshop (*botteghe granducali*) created a miniature altar that is regarded as the earliest example of this technique. The altar is decorated with scenery in mosaic and the three-dimensional figures of Christ and the Samaritan woman are made of precisely fitted cubes of multicolored jasper, agate, and amethyst.⁹ At the turn of the 17th century, the Grand Ducal workshop conceived a large project for an altar for the Medici family chapel in the church of San Lorenzo. To complete it, two generations of the Mochi family worked on the figures of the Apostles for half a century. Today, some eight sculptures are known to have been made for this altar using the three-dimensional mosaic technique: Luke, John,

Mark, Matthew, Peter, Paul, James, and an archangel. Each of the rather large figures is of the same height (about 32 cm) and was designed in the same manner: Standing barefoot and dressed in long robes and wide draping cloaks made of contrasting-colored stone.¹⁰ This ambitious project was never completed owing to financial and technical problems. Despite this, it had a great influence on Florentine artisans and artists.

The relief mosaic technique spread from Italy to northern Europe and became much sought after by European princes. In Prague, the main residence of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II, the outstanding carver Ottavio Miseroni (1568–1624) worked at court from the late 16th century through the first quarter of the 17th century. Concentrating on small works—a type of colored cameo—, Miseroni created miniatures characterized by the rare beauty of the Bohemian stones used.¹¹

8 Ludmila A. Budrina, “Rel’efnyi naturmort v rabotakh petergovskikh kamnerezov 1840–1860-kh gg.: istoki, kontekst, osobennosti” (“Relief Still-Lifes in the Peterhof Lapidary Production of the 1840s–1860s: Origins, Context, Particularities”), *Arkhitecton: Izvestia vuzov (Architecton: Proceedings of Higher Education)*, issue 4 (68), (2019), http://archvuz.ru/2019_4/21

9 Rudolf Distelberger, *Die Kunst des Steinschnitts: Prunkgefäße, Kameen und Commessi aus der Kunstkammer* (Vienna, 2002), 174–176.

10 Wolfram Koeppe and Annemaria Giusti, *Art of the Royal Court: Treasures in Pietre Dure from the Palaces of Europe* (New York, 2008), 147–148.

11 Rudolf Distelberger, *Die Kunst des Steinschnitts: Prunkgefäße, Kameen und Commessi aus der Kunstkammer* (Vienna, 2002), 284–286.

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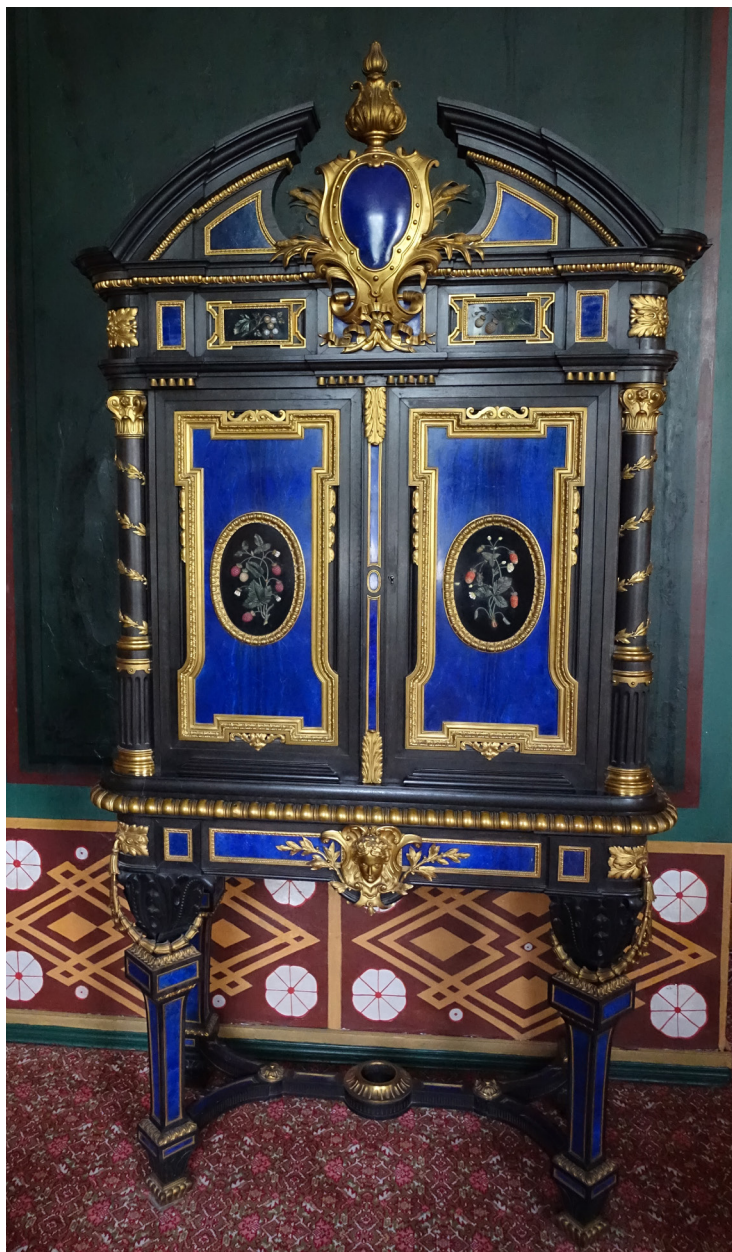


Fig. 2

Cabinet with relief mosaic (1867).

Peterhof Imperial Lapidary Factory.

Thurgau, Arenenberg Castle.

Photo by the author.

In 1671–1679, Christoph Labhardt (1644–1695), a master lapidary, was commissioned to create a monumental mantelpiece composition at the court of Count John of Nassau-Idstein. Using a complex combination of flat, relief, and three-dimensional mosaics in the Bohemian style, Labhardt devised an allegorical scene that unfolds against a landscape with an architectural motif crafted using the Florentine mosaic technique with some relief elements (clouds, columns). The virtues of a wise ruler (the female figures of Prudence, Modesty, Justice, Piety, Generosity, Diligence, accompanied by Art and History) surround the young rider on a rearing horse. The piece uses various types of jasper, chalcedony, and agate from Central European deposits.¹²

At the beginning of the 18th century, two reliquaries were produced in the Grand Ducal workshop under the supervision of Giuseppe Antonio Torricelli (1662–1719): The Reliquary of Dominican Saints and the Reliquary of Saint Fathers the Founders. In the niches of the small altars can be seen mosaic sculptures depicting saints.¹³ The foremost artists working at the studio, the sculptor and gem carver Torricelli and the designer Giovanni Batista Foggini (1652–1719), were innovators in the development of

sculptural inlay during this period. These two artists collaborated on numerous reliquaries and other religious objects commissioned by the Duke. The complex composition of the Reliquary of Saint Emeric (1717) represents this saint kneeling in front of an altar looking up at a vision of the Pietà. The eye takes in the bright and varied stone palette (red Bohemian agate, Persian lapis lazuli, and a cloak of yellow Sicilian jasper lined with Saxon quartz alternating with pieces of amethyst) and the addition of precious stone decoration. The piece is unusual for earlier works by Florentine artisans, as the edges of the garments, tops of the shoes, and the sword are jeweled with gold-set rubies and diamonds.

The sculptures of Roman emperors created in the first half of the 18th century in Frankfurt, where Johann Bernhard Schwarzenburger (1672–1741) was active, are also distinguished by their lavish decor. Schwarzenburger's workshop produced mosaic sculptures of legendary emperors such as Titus, Caesar, Domitianus, and Vespasianus. In the 1730s, this series was acquired by the Elector of Saxony. The works dating back to the first half of the 18th century were clearly influenced by Baroque splendor: gold and precious stone highlights added extra shine,

¹² Koeppe and Giusti, *Art of the Royal Court* (New York, 2008), 260–261.

¹³ Koeppe and Giusti, *Art of the Royal Court* (New York, 2008), 203–204.

increasing the detailing of the works and turning them into a universal and remarkable embodiment of wealth.

In the mid-19th century, as attention turned to previous eras, bright colors were integrated once again into interior design and interest in the art of small-scale three-dimensional sculpture returned. Contrary to many other places in Europe, the Florentine court workshops were still active despite the advances and new rulers that shaped the city in the 19th century. Niccolò Betti, the director of the *Opificio delle Pietre Dure* (*pietre dure* workshop), decided which orders and trends would be followed by its artists during the last years of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany through to 1876. The long-forgotten tradition of relief and three-dimensional mosaic became popular once again in the final period of Italy's unification (1861–1871). Paolo Ricci (1835–1892) created the first Florentine *comesso* sculptures of the 19th century, preferring the more laconic style of the mosaic sculptures of the early 17th century to Torricelli's Baroque splendor. Ricci exhibited an inlay figure of Cimabue at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair. Then, three years later, he created a sculpture portraying Dante as an Ambassador to Boniface VIII. Around 1880, his

studio began working on a “Liberated Italy” mosaic sculpture in commemoration of the annexation of Venice.¹⁴ It is worth mentioning that the young Carl Fabergé spent a few months in Florence at exactly that time, visiting the capital of Tuscany in the mid-1860s as part of a trip he took to study outstanding works by European jewelers and carvers.

Ricci was not the only Florentine craftsman to produce multi-colored items in various colored stones at the turn of the 20th century. The sculptor Aristide Petrilli (1868 – after 1907), a graduate of the Art Institute and an Honorary Member of the Florence Academy of Art since 1898, made extensive use of mixed materials, creating several known small sculptures and sculpture compositions on columnar pedestals made of variegated marble, rock crystal, lapis lazuli, and malachite in the late 1890s and early 1900s.¹⁵ Artists' travels, international shows, and academic exhibitions sparked a renewed interest in three-dimensional mosaic that quickly spread beyond Italy.

The works of Georges Henri Lemaire (1853–1914) provide interesting examples of the French approach to three-dimensional mosaic. In the 1890s–1910s, he

¹⁴ *Dagli splendori di corte al lusso borghese. L'Opificio delle Pietre Dure nell'Italia unita*, ed. Annamaria Giusti (Livorno, 2011), 116–118.

¹⁵ Ludmila A. Budrina, “Five Centuries of Three-Dimensional Mosaic,” *Heroes. History in Ural Stone Carving* (Vaduz-Jekaterinburg, 2016), 19.

created several sculptures in colored stones. While in his early works he used one material for the “main body” of the sculpture and only used a different one for hands and heads, a piece produced in the later period of his artistic career—the Etienne Marcel sculpture—features a broad variety of elements with bright sections for his character’s clothes.¹⁶

At the turn of the 20th century, the Ural stonecutting school and the craftsmanship of its followers were widely recognized. Carl Fabergé (1846–1920) was famous for his innovation and the skillful combination of the techniques and stylistic flourishes of past epochs. When opening his own stonecutting enterprise in Petersburg, graduates of the Ekaterinburg Art and Industrial School were invited to head the new branch of the House of Fabergé. After spending several months in Florence in the mid-1860s, Fabergé learned a great deal about the historical collections and contemporary work of the Tuscan masters. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that examples of three-dimensional mosaic were among the first pieces produced at his own stonecutting workshop. At the end of 1900s, the House of Fabergé began creating the “Characters of Russia” figurine series (a

street cleaner, digger, coachman, coach driver, etc.).¹⁷ The success of these mosaic sculptures with customers led to the creation of further figurines ranging from archetypical and portrait images, as seen on the streets of the capital or at the royal court, to complex genre compositions, involving fairytale characters and caricatures of generalized scenes of life in Russia. The House of Fabergé completed more than fifty figures between 1908 and 1916. Most of these sculptures were created in the vein of European traditions, using rather large stone pieces of contrasting colors to ensure that the figurines were as decorative as possible. The treatment of additional ornaments made with precious metals and stones are reminiscent of the German masters of the first half of the 18th century, who created the accessories (weapons, buttons) in gold or silver and sometimes with enamel elements.

In the complex field of the Russian stone carving art market, the House of Fabergé was only rivaled by the workshop of Alexey Denisov-Uralsky (1864–1926), whose owner was from Ekaterinburg. Denisov-Uralsky’s first experiments in combining different stones in one sculpture were devoted to images of birds. Us-

16 Budrina, “Five Centuries”, *Heroes* (Vaduz-Jekaterinburg, 2016), 20.

17 Mikhail Ovchinnikov, “K voprosy o roli tiragnigo iskusstva v tvorcheskom processe firmy Faberge” (“On the Role of Prints in the Design of Faberge”), in *Jewellery Art of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries: Material from the International Academic Conference at Fabergé Museum in St. Petersburg, September 2018*, ed. Marina Lopato (Saint-Petersburg, 2019), 73–79.

ing his talents, the stonecutter created a large series of allegorical figures of countries at war in 1915–1916. The series included 15 compositions.¹⁸ Twelve pieces represented the countries participating in World War I (Russia, France, Britain, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro, Belgium, Japan, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey), with the remaining three being of a more general character. Some of the countries were depicted as multicolored sculptures: The allegorical representations of Austria and France, as well as the “Memorial to Wilhelm”, being the most complex composition. In contrast to the House of Fabergé, Denisov-Uralsky only rarely incorporated metal accents. Stones provided the main decorative element, just as they had in 17th century Florentine masterpieces.

Fluctuating market conditions due to World War I and the October Revolution resulted in the closure of the capital’s workshops. Stonecutters were forced to seek new opportunities or return to their hometowns in the hopes of continuing their work in the calm of provincial life. Stone carvings created between World War I and II followed less costly models, yet still allowed masters to exercise their métier.

Three-dimensional mosaic experienced a reviv-

al after World War II following the establishment of the #42 Special Vocational and Technical School in Sverdlovsk (as Ekaterinburg was known from 1924 to 1991). The school employed masters from the Russian Gems Factory—the successor to the Ekaterinburg Imperial Lapidary Factory—including one of the senior specialists from the Nicholas Tataurov (1887–1959) workshop, who participated in the creation of a stone mosaic map of France (1898–1900) and a map of communist industries (1936–1937). Tataurov mentored the first class to graduate from the school during their creation of “Ural Forging Victory” in 1948 (fig. 3).¹⁹ Three-dimensional mosaic was subsequently incorporated into the curriculum for the Ural’s young lapidaries.

In a certain sense, the 1973 exhibition of pieces by Vasily Konovalenko (1929–1989) inspired the use of three-dimensional mosaic in the work of the Ural masters.²⁰ His first works reveal a personal fascination with grotesque images, genre compositions, and multilayered elements. Konovalenko’s output is dif-

18 Ludmila A. Budrina, “Allegoricheskaia karta: Pervaia mirovaia viyna v kamnereznykh rabotakh A.K. Denisova-Uralskogo” (“Allegorical Map: World War I in Stone Carving Works by A.K. Denisoff-Ouralskiy”), *Uralskiy Istoricheskii Vestnik* (Ural Historical Journal), issue 1 (42) (2014): 82–88.

19 Ludmila A. Budrina, “Obemnaia mozaika v kamnereznom iskusstve: evropeyskaia traditsia do i posle Faberge” (“Three-dimensional Mosaic in Stonecutting Art: European Tradition before and after Fabergé”), *Izvestia Ural'skogo Federal'nogo Universiteta. Seria 2 Gumanitarnye nauki* (Izvestia Ural Federal University Journal. Series 2. Humanities and Arts), issue 1 (99), (2012), 20–22.

20 Vladimir A. Pushkarev, V. Konovalenko. *Uvelirnye raboty iz samotsvetov* (V. Konovalenko. *Works of Jewellery in Precious Stones*) (Moscow, 1973).



Fig. 3

“Ural Forging Victory” (1948).

Nicolay Tataurov and the students of the Sverdlovsk Special Vocational and Technical School No. 42.
Ekaterinburg, Rifey Vocational College Museum.

Photo by E. Litvinov.

ferent from the pieces of the mid-century Ural masters due to the variety of stones employed and his extensive use of metal.

At the end of the 20th century, pieces by the House of Fabergé began appearing in publications and exhibitions once again. These included assembled figurines from storerooms that were known to a select few specialists. Their discovery was promoted by the sudden changes in the political and economic circumstances in Russia, as well as the exhibitions held from 1989 to 1992. New opportunities for independent creative endeavors, once released from the ideological and institutional limitations of the previous period, provided strong incentives for the development of individual work and the establishment of a large audience of stonecutting art admirers. This resulted in significant growth in the production of colored stone figurines for exhibitions, private collections, and museums.

The beginning of the new millennium was marked by the popularity of complex multi-figure compositions whose creation required the participation of artists from different disciplines. This led to the

establishment of large studios in Ekaterinburg. The Svyatogor Stone Carving Studio (fig. 4, 5) and Alexey Antonov Stone-Crafting House employ numerous stonecutters, jewelers, sculptors, and designers to work on each piece.

Currently, Ural three-dimensional hard stone mosaics are enjoying new acclaim. Inspired by the centuries-old heritage of European stonecutters working with colored stones, the traditions of Russian stonecutting art, and new technical capabilities, current masters are creating complex dynamic compositions and experimenting freely with a wide array of materials.

The Shmotev Family Foundation, one of the largest private collections of contemporary three-dimensional mosaics, has held important exhibitions in Europe (Vaduz & Basel, 2015–2016) and Russia (Ekaterinburg, 2018; Saint Petersburg, 2022). These prominent displays point to the preservation of “Revival” techniques while showcasing the artistic development of Russian stonecutting art to a growing audience.²¹ (fig. 6) //

21 Ludmila A. Budrina and Enrico Colle, *Russian Soul. Contemporary coloured stone masterpieces from the Shmotev Family Collection* (Ekaterinburg, 2020).



Fig. 4

“Swan Princess” (2012).

Svyatogor Stone Carving Studio.

Ekaterinburg, Shmotev Family Foundation.

Photo by E. Litvinov.

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Fig. 5

“Saint George” (2014).

Svyatogor Stone Carving Studio.
Ekaterinburg, Shmotev Family Foundation.
Photo by E. Litvinov.

Fig. 6

Exhibition of the Shmotev Family Foundation Collection

at the Fabergé Museum.
Saint-Petersburg, 2022.
Photo by the author.



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19th-Century Viennese Revival Objects in the Medeiros e Almeida Collection

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ABSTRACT

Situated in central Lisbon, the Medeiros e Almeida Museum holds the decorative arts collection gathered by Portuguese businessman and benefactor António de Medeiros e Almeida (1895–1986). Among its eclectic collections, the Museum houses a small but quite significant group of Austrian revival pieces known as “Viennese enamels”.

The term “Viennese enamels” is here applied to elaborate objets d’art, produced in Vienna during the second half of the 19th century, that combine an elegant design with the use of a variety of materials and admirable expertise in their execution. These extraordinary objects reflect the Historicist movements of the time and are primarily inspired by the Renaissance style. However, the extraordinary skill of the artisans meant that their creations very often surpassed the earlier models they were based on. Although the aesthetic were revivalist in general, the artisans did not limit themselves to producing copies, but rather produced true 19th century pieces.

This paper aims to contribute to the study of these astonishing objects, by placing them in the context in which they were created. It also hopes to sharpen interest in this type of revivalist production in general and in this group in the Medeiros e Almeida Collection in particular.

19th-Century Viennese Revival Objects in the Medeiros e Almeida Collection

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Situated in central Lisbon, the Medeiros e Almeida Museum holds the decorative arts collection gathered by Portuguese businessman and benefactor António de Medeiros e Almeida (1895–1986). The collection comprises a great variety of art forms – furniture, painting, sculpture, textiles, jewellery, silverwork, clocks and watches, and ceramics – dating from the 2nd century BC to the 20th century CE and includes a small but important group of Austrian revival pieces from the last quarter of the 19th century

Although much investigation is still needed, this paper aims to present these revival objects, sometimes known as “Viennese enamels”,¹ by placing them in the context in which they were created. It also hopes to sharpen interest in this type of production in general and in this group in the Medeiros e Almeida Collection in particular.

19th-Century Viennese Revivalism

The latter decades of the 18th century saw the reappearance and reinterpretation of past styles all over Europe. This trend grew during the following century – as a result of the rise of the bourgeoisie, fruit of the Industrial Revolution, and in connection with new philosophical and political currents affirming national identities – and continued until after the beginning of the 20th century.

Vienna, one of the most elegant cities of the 18th century, attracted goldsmiths, silversmiths, enamelers, jewellers, stone cutters and other specialised artisans in search of patronage. All of these skilled workers contributed to the prolific production of *objets de vertu*, which were much in vogue at the time, and the legacy of this know-how resulted in the exceptional technical quality of the Historicist production of the second half of the 19th century.

1 The designation “Viennese enamels” is here used as a generic term for elaborate *objets d’art* produced in Vienna in the second half of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th century. These objects were, in fact, extravagant assemblies combining various materials, thus the use of this terminology is somewhat ambiguous.

After the nationalist revolutions of 1848, Vienna quickly entered a period of relative prosperity that led to the splendour of Viennese decorative arts during the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867–1918). In 1857, Emperor Franz Joseph I issued a decree ordering the demolition of the obsolete city walls and the construction of a new boulevard, the Ringstrasse, that encircled the city centre. The magnificent buildings erected along this modern avenue – the Imperial Court Theatre, opera house, Vienna City Hall, museums, hotels, etc. – most of which were built in the Historicist style, together with the new sophisticated shops, became the model of good taste. However, the importance of the Ringstrasse goes beyond the architecture; it is also reflected in the decorative arts and in Viennese society itself, in what was known as the Ringstrasse style. As Jayne W. Dye and Karin Sixl-Daniell put it: “Harmony was sought in exterior building style, interiors, decorative arts, furnishings and even costume”.²

Prominent silversmiths, goldsmiths and enamellers – such as Hermann Ratzerdorfer (1819–1894) or Hermann Böhm (active 1866–1922) – established

major workshops in Vienna during the second half of the 19th century and started creating luxury items in the revival style, targeting both the growing Viennese clientele and the export market at a time when there was great demand for opulence and exquisite objects. According to Erika Speel, an art historian who specialises in enamels, the revival style derived initially from the need to restore historical pieces, a practice which provided the necessary technical and stylistic knowledge that, ultimately, evolved into the production of replicas and, in some cases, fakes.³

Other factors that contributed to the emergence of Viennese revival objects and, in particular, to interest in Renaissance aesthetics were a fascination for cabinets of curiosities from the 16th and 17th centuries – with their collections of curious objects (in value or rarity) – and the opening of museums, such as the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (inaugurated in 1864) and, later, the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Art History Museum), where the extensive imperial collections could be appreciated. However, the extraordinary skill and inventiveness of these artisans meant that their creations

2 Jayne W. Dye and Karin Sixl-Daniell, “Historismus Silver-Gilt Dessert Set by Hermann Ratzerdorfer”, *ASCAS online*, article 79, April 2007, <http://www.ascasonline.org/articoloAPR179.html>.

3 Erika Speel, “Viennese Enamels in the Renaissance Revival Style”, *The Magazine Antiques* (April 2006): 137.

very often surpassed the earlier models they sought inspiration from, originating true 19th century show-pieces, the so-called Prunkstücke, that they proudly presented at International Exhibitions.

Combining elaborate gold and silver frameworks embellished with semi-precious stones and enamels, including the newly fashionable rock crystal and lapis-lazuli, these objects reached their peak of popularity in the 1870s and 1880s.⁴ After this date, modifications were made to allow a larger and more competitive production, taking advantage of remarkable Viennese skills in enamelling techniques, which allowed the costliest materials to be replaced by cheaper ones ornamented with sections of painted enamel, mostly decorated with graceful mythological themes.⁵ “Viennese enamels” continued to be produced until the early 20th century, when revivalist designs became interwoven with the language of strong colours and undulating lines of the Vienna Secession.

Viennese revival pieces in the Medeiros e Almeida Collection

Although there are around twenty Viennese revival pieces on display at the Medeiros e Almeida Museum, our attention will focus exclusively on five that share the same time period and place of origin, but also the fact of being exhibition objects (Prunkstücke).⁶ All five combine an elegant design with the use of a variety of materials and admirable expertise in their execution, showing the extraordinary skill of the artisans working in Vienna.⁷ They are duly hall-marked with the head of Diana in profile (Dianakopf) in a border of five lobes, with the letter “A” under her nose (city mark for Vienna) and the fineness mark at the nape of her neck (fig. 1), as used from 1872 onwards.

This group of pieces perfectly exemplify the variety of materials that characterised earlier “Viennese Enamels”.

4 Erika Speel, *Painted Enamels. An Illustrated Survey 1500-1920*, (Aldershot: Burlington-Lund Humphries, 2008), 142–143.

5 Erika Speel, “19th Century Style. Viennese painted enamels”, *Antique Dealer and Collectors Guide* (September/October 2005): 46–47.

6 The other pieces, a group of some fifteen small table clocks, while elegant, were designed for a broader public. Their production was probably later and had its own particularities.

7 These five pieces first appeared in publication as part of the Medeiros e Almeida Collection in *A Treasure in the City* by Teresa Vilaça (ed.) (Lisbon: Medeiros e Almeida Foundation, 2002), 121, 128-131 and 156-157.

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Fig. 1

The Diana head mark, or Dianakopf, was used in the imperial Austro-Hungarian hallmark system between 1867 and 1922. The cartouche shape and number within indicate the silver fineness. At the beginning of 1872, a letter was added to indicate the city of assay. In the image, the Diana head mark is visible on the casket in the Medeiros e Almeida collection, displayed with the letter "A" for the city of Vienna.

Rock crystal (hyaline quartz), prized since ancient times for its natural beauty and ability to refract light, was especially appreciated by European courts during the Renaissance, when objects made from this material were included in cabinets of curiosities. “Rediscovered” by the 19th-century Historicist movements, at the time it was considered one of the most precious materials in the decorative arts.

Lapis lazuli, a semi-precious stone, had also been used since antiquity in jewellery, goldsmithing, architectural cladding or ground as a pigment. It was much valued during the 19th century for its intense blue colour, blue being the favourite colour of the time.

Silver, silver gilt and copper were used for the mountings and embellished with semi-precious stones and enamels that drew on the long Viennese tradition.

The maker’s marks on these very elaborate objects – which required the collaboration of various artisans, each an expert in their own area – usually corresponded to the person who designed the object, coordinated the work of all the artisans and was also very often responsible for marketing the final object. Little is as yet known about the three “Prunkstücke makers” of the objects in the Medeiros e

Almeida Collection: Karl Bender, Leopold Weininger and Karl Rössler. Hopefully, the identification of other pieces of theirs will shed light not only on their work but also on this fascinating period of great creativity.

The horn of plenty or cornucopia (fig. 2) bears the mark “KB”, present on some of the best works of this type produced in Vienna in the last quarter of the 19th century. Traditionally associated with the Viennese jeweller Karl Bank (active 1895–1924), this mark is now attributed to Karl Bender (active 1874–1892). The piece, created to evoke 16th-century drinking horns, is made up of sections of engraved rock crystal girded with four silver-gilt rings, densely decorated with semi-precious stones and hunting scenes in basse taille enamel, one of which shows the miracle of Saint Hubert, the patron saint of hunters. The horn is supported by the cast figure of a stag and topped by a hunter, and the tip is finished with the head of a bear. Horns such as this one, in crystal, silver and enamels, were quite popular, later versions featuring painted enamels depicting mythological themes. Cornucopias of this type were also produced by Hermann Böhm, Leopold Weininger and Karl Rössler, some of which came with their own velvet-lined leather cases.



Fig. 2

Horn of Plenty by Karl Bender (active 1874–1892).

Height: 49 cm.

Museum number: FMA 169.

Born in Bohemia, Karl Rössler (active 1890–1916) was one of the great specialists in the production of Prunkstücke and the author of the set of three mantelpiece ornaments (fig. 3) and the two-headed bird (fig. 4) in the Medeiros e Almeida Collection. These pieces are all covered in panels of polished lapis lazuli and a showy profusion of polychrome enamelling.

The body of the two-headed bird forms a recipient closed by a dragon-shaped lid. The bird is crowned and wears a necklace with a pendant, and although the crown is not like that of the Austro-Hungarian Empire it is not totally unreasonable to look on this piece as a representation of the union of the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary (two heads, one crown). Other representations of birds found in Viennese Historicist decorative arts have no crown, regardless of whether they have one or two heads, and yet other examples are ridden by a figure. This kind of bird is also often identified as a roc, the enormous bird of prey of Middle Eastern mythology that was made popular by the stories of Sinbad, one of the heroes of *The Thousand and One Nights*.

The mantelpiece set consists of two candlesticks for five candles and a clock made in the form of a three-storey mediaeval tower crowned by an eagle with outstretched wings. The decorative motifs – masks, attributes of art and science, representations of the four seasons, flora and fauna – perfectly reflect the taste of the European elites.

The result of a partnership between Rössler and Leopold Weininger (1854–1922), the design of the colossal table clock in figure 5 is also based on an architectural structure and has similar ornamental motifs to the central piece in figure 3: four female figures representing the seasons, garlands of flowers and chased bells. This clock stands out for its rarity – we have no record of similar clocks – as well as for its size and the richness of the materials used. According to old documents in the museum's archives, this clock was commissioned by (or for) King Ludwig II of Bavaria.⁸ This notion is consistent with the presence of a white peacock crowning the piece, since this is a recurring decorative element in works made for King Ludwig, but no real supporting evidence exists.

8 Teresa Vilaça (ed.), *Tesouros da Intimidade Real. Objetos do uso pessoal de Príncipes Europeus* (Lisbon: Fundação Medeiros e Almeida, 2005), 70–73.



Fig. 3

Mantelpiece set by Karl Rössler (active 1890–1916).

Clock height: 87 cm. Height of the candlesticks: 64 cm.

Museum numbers: FMA 156, FMA 157 and FMA 158.

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Fig. 4

Double-headed bird by Karl Rössler (active 1890–1916).

Height: 66.2 cm.

Museum number: FMA 167.



Fig. 5

Table clock marked by Karl Rössler (active 1890–1916) and Leopold Weininger (1854–1922).

Height: 110 cm.

Museum number: FMA 1064.

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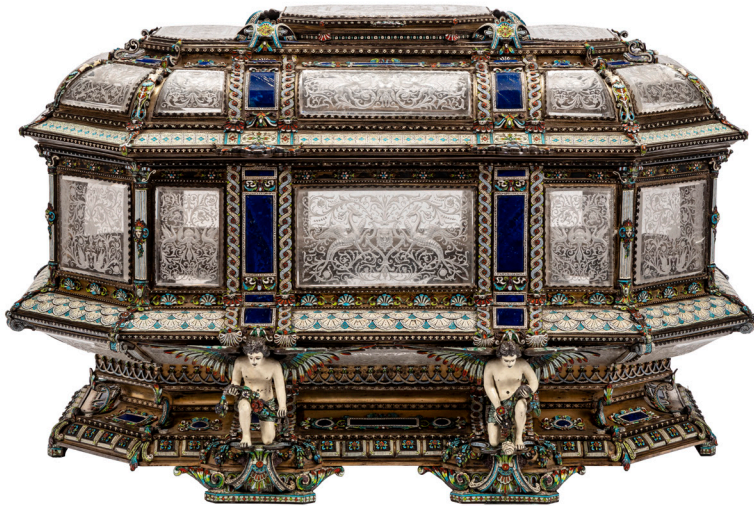


Fig. 6

Casket by Leopold Weininger (1854–1922).

Museum number: FMA 126.

Height: 40 cm; width: 68 cm.

Weininger, a specialist in enamel work and “imitations of antiques”, also made the casket in figure 6. Comprising fifty-one engraved plaques of rock crystal mounted on a silver frame and decorated with enamels and panels of lapis lazuli, this piece was inspired by caskets produced in Venice during the second half of the 16th and early 17th century.⁹ The transparency of the rock crystal made it possible to see the objects inside, which could be jewels, relics, or, sometimes, the trousseau of a baby blessed by the pope sent as a gift to the heir of a Catholic court. In the context of Viennese Historicism, these sophisticated objects were reproduced as luxury showpieces.

Once again, taking Erika Speel’s words as my own, the most spectacular exhibition quality Viennese pieces – among them those presented in this article – are representative “of that period of the 19th century when there was a drive to recapture the imaginative

and complex designs of previous times, which needed the time-consuming traditional skills of several specialists”.¹⁰

Carl E. Schorske, writing of 19th-century Vienna, states that “the very modernity of the Ringstrasse consisted in its syncretic mastery of the diverse historical traditions that preceded it”.¹¹ As components of the Ringstrasse style, Viennese revival objects share this character. They are not mere copies or reproductions; they are the syncretic mastery of the diverse historical traditions that preceded them. Or, as Jacob Falke wrote in 1873 in his article on the Vienna Exhibition, “how right it is to point to the examples of the past for the reform of our taste”.¹² //

⁹ Venetian renaissance caskets of this type can be seen at the Walters Art Museum (Baltimore), the Art Institute of Chicago and the MNAA-Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (Lisbon), among others.

¹⁰ Speel, “19th Century Style...”, 48.

¹¹ Carl E. Schorske, *Thinking with History: Explorations in the Passage to Modernism* (Princeton: University Press, 1998).

¹² Jacob Falke, “The Vienna Exhibition in Connexion with Art-Industry”, *The Workshop*, vol. 6, no. 11 (1873): 162, doi: 10.2307/25586736.

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Currents of Baroque Revival in the Decorative Arts in Malta: 1870-1900

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses and analyses the strong presence of ornate design currents on the small central Mediterranean islands of Malta and Gozo in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Despite its geographical location at the periphery of Europe, Malta has a deeply rooted and time-honoured tradition in the field of decoration and ornament which goes back centuries. The nineteenth century came to consolidate the European calling of the decorative arts on the islands and aligned them with the major trends in design across Europe. Works in silver, wood, embroidery and other media, commissioned especially for the numerous churches and monastic establishments, were produced both in Malta and abroad in important centres like Rome, Paris and Lyon.

From the late 1860s, the interest in Renaissance Revival forms and the eclectic fusion of varied styles was joined by a growing love for more ornate solutions. The eclectic flavour remained but decoration turned heavier and Baroque and Rococo forms became more insistent and diffused in a large number of works. The available evidence shows that this tendency started to become more evident in the 1870s. Maltese production from this period involved works both by locals – such as the Cannataci silversmith brothers, Francesco Saverio (active from 1867) and Roberto (active 1863–1890s), and the wood carvers Paolo Bugeja (1840–after 1905) and Carmelo Teuma (ca. 1869–ca. 1936) – and foreigners, such as the Italian Vincenzo Cardona (active ca. 1880–ca. 1913). This current continued to consolidate itself in the last two decades of the century, especially in the works of designers and carvers active in the maritime city of Vittoriosa. It peaked at the turn of the twentieth century and persisted in the works of the two most prolific designers of the first half of the twentieth century: Abramo Gatt (1863–1944) and Emanuele Buhagiar (1876–1962).

Despite the fact that the Maltese archipelago is situated at the extreme southern periphery of Europe, its artistic and cultural vocation was for many centuries decidedly European. Throughout the nineteenth century, Malta was a significant British Crown Colony. Its cultural ethos was, however, thoroughly Italian, mostly resulting from the time-honoured cultural exchanges with several Italian centres and the strong presence of the Roman Catholic Church, which fostered a staunchly religious population. As the nineteenth century progressed, the celebration of religious feasts in honour of the patron saints of the different churches evolved into a fully-fledged annual festival in which the local population heavily participated. For the occasion of the titular feast, the church came to be embellished with decorative works specifically commissioned for this annual occurrence. Thus, feasts became pivotal in the development of the ecclesiastical decorative arts.¹

This peculiar context permitted Malta to absorb strong continental currents, becoming a microcosm of the larger European scenario. In fact, throughout the nineteenth century, the most important design currents present on the continent can be seen in the

many items of silver, stone and wood carvings, furniture and a myriad of ecclesiastical paraphernalia which were commissioned by the constant patronage of churches and monasteries. Throughout the century, one thus sees the percolation of continental design currents – including Neoclassical, Renaissance Revival, Gothic Revival and Eclecticism – into the island under various guises and through different channels, including pattern books, design manuals and artefacts commissioned from important centres like Italy, France and England.²

An interest in ornate design solutions

From the late 1860s, the interest in Renaissance Revival forms and the eclectic fusion of varied styles was joined by a growing taste for more ornate solutions. The eclectic flavour remained but decoration turned heavier, with Baroque and Rococo forms becoming more established. The available evidence shows that this tendency started to occur

¹ This paper is largely based on Mark Sagona, “The ecclesiastical decorative arts in Malta 1850-1900: Style and Ornament” (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History of Art, University of Malta, 2014).

² These currents have been analysed in the following studies: Mark Sagona, “Changing artistic taste in Malta at the turn of the nineteenth century: a case for the ecclesiastical decorative arts”, *At Home in Art: Essays in honour of Mario Buhagiar*, ed. Charlene Vella (Malta: Midsea Books, 2016), 289-303; Mark Sagona, “Malta and the Renaissance Revival: Ecclesiastical decorative arts at the crossroads of Britain and Italy”, *The Decorative Arts Society – 1850 to the present* (Journal 29, 2015), 11-39; Mark Sagona, “Gothic Revival influences on Europe’s border: change and resistance in Malta between decorative arts and architecture”, *The Decorative Arts Society – 1850 to the present* (Journal 45, 2021), 32-53.

more frequently in the 1870s. The current continued to consolidate itself in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, peaked at the turn of the twentieth century and persisted virtually unhindered up to World War II, as epitomised in the works of several designers active in the first half of the twentieth century. A more ornate style is especially seen in the body of works produced by artists who were born from the 1840s onwards.

This current was so strong that even Nicola Zammit (1815–1899), Malta's champion of Eclecticism, could not escape it. A clear Baroque Revival quality is evident in one of his late works: the exposition throne for St Julian's Parish Church (fig. 1), a work which he designed in 1890 when he was around seventy-five years old.³ There is also a clear penchant for heavy ornamentation in the ornamental drawings of Lazzaro Pisani (1854–1932), one of the leading painters in Malta at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴

The currents of Baroque Revival are also equally apparent in architecture. The sadly destroyed Baroque Revival Royal Opera House, built in Valletta to the designs of the British architect Edward Middleton Barry (1830–80) in 1866, was one of Malta's

most important buildings of the second half of the nineteenth century and inaugurated the Neo-Baroque idiom on the island. The style is also manifest in some of the Maltese churches of the time, as exemplified by St Joseph Parish Church (Msida) of 1891, designed by architect Andrea Grima (1853–1918). International parallels, such as the Brompton Oratory in London by Herbert Gribble (1847–1894) built between 1880 and 1884, or the Palazzo di Giustizia in Rome (1889–1911) by Guglielmo Calderini (1837–1916), show that Malta was not an isolated case.

Early manifestations in the 1870s

Among the earliest works to reflect an interest in more profuse ornamentation are those of the designer and carver Antonio Catania (1828–1904) from Rabat. His output is especially related to the works which he designed and created for his own Parish Church of St Paul's in the same town. Catania belonged to the same generation as Nicola Zammit and their contemporary Cesare Galdes (1822–1890), but he belongs to a more provincial ethos. Catania apparently spent some time in Rome but his movements and associations there are not precisely known, except for having been offered lodgings at the Basilica of Santi Apostoli by the prominent Maltese Franciscan Gio Antonio Bonelli (1819–1882).

Catania's claim to some importance is the impressively ornate altar canopy which hangs above

³ Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 150–151.

⁴ For Pisani's decorative works, see Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 153–159.

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Figure 1.

A gilt-wood monstrance throne from the St Julian Parish Church, St Julian's, Malta, designed by the Nicola Zammit and Paolo Bugeja workshop in 1890 and manufactured in 1893. Photo by Charles Paul Azzopardi.

the high altar in St Paul's, Rabat, during the feast of Corpus Domini (fig. 2). Commissioned by the Arch-Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament of Rabat, the work was first used for the feast of Corpus Domini in 1879.⁵ The well-documented commission is emblematic of the complexity of such undertakings which required the collaboration of several masters. Managed by the priests Emmanuele dei Conti Manduca, Pietro Paolo Xuereb and Gio Carlo Grech Delicata, who were also responsible for raising the funds, the canopy cost the impressive sum of over 4,595 *scudi*.⁶ The canopy's scale and decorative intricacy is one of the most impressive and among the largest in Malta. Convex cornices and segmental-headed corners on both the canopy and its hanger convey a ponderous and exuberant character. Numerous consoles placed across the frieze area, the openwork of stylised scrolls interspersed with Eucharistic symbols, and the towering forms of the hanger above, create a visually exciting spectacle of decorative profusion.

Profusion in ecclesiastical silver

The interest in profuse ornament is also present in a corpus of silver liturgical and processional *objets d'art* by the two most prolific silversmiths in late nineteenth-century Malta. These were the Cannataci brothers: Roberto (active 1863–late 1890s) and Francesco Saverio (active from 1867), the nephews of Saverio Cannataci (1783–after 1857), the most artistically important silversmith active in Malta in the first half of the century. Roberto, who adopted his mother's maiden name and was thus known as Cannataci Falzon, was the more prolific of the two brothers. They worked together from their workshop at No. 29d Strada Vallone, Birkirkara. Although their religious output is better known, their work was not exclusively religious.⁷

Their firm was known by the official name of *Fratelli Cannataci*. The available evidence shows that the masters were relatively popular and their works sought after by the ecclesiastical establishments. They manufactured artefacts both to the designs of the established masters, such as Cesare Galdes, Nicola Zammit and Lazzaro Pisani, and also their

⁵ Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 190–192.

⁶ All the documentation pertaining to this commission is discussed in Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 190–191.

⁷ Mark Sagona, ed., *The Nadur Basilica in Gozo: Art – Architecture, Decoration* (Malta: Nadur Parish Office, 2018), 141. The private and secular works of the Cannataci brothers have yet to be properly studied. One such example is the sugar bowl in the collection of the Nadur parish church in Gozo.

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Figure 2.

A gilt-wood altar canopy with gold thread embroidery on white lamé silk from the St Paul Parish Church in Rabat, Malta, made by Antonio Catania and an unidentified Lyon (?) manufacturer in 1879.

Photo by Charles Paul Azzopardi.

own. The works produced to the designs of other artists are of a notably superior quality, while those designed by the workshop itself fluctuate and are usually coarsely finished. A gilt silver ciborium, produced in 1865 for Żejtun Parish Church, provides a very good example of an early liturgical *objet d'art* by Roberto. The well-proportioned and satisfactorily hammered work is characterised by a large bowl supported by openwork decoration of scrolls, vine tendrils, wheat and cherub heads. The work's stem and base come very close to known works by Saverio Cannataci, including an 1837 gilt silver chalice in the collection of the same church.⁸

The works by the Cannataci brothers are usually easily identifiable, not only by their maker's marks, which are normally present, but especially by their peculiarly ornate characteristics and the repetition of motifs such as flowers and cherub heads. Their production is marked by ornamental profusion, as can be seen, for example, in the sets of stylistically related silver processional lanterns for the Arch-Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament at St Paul's Parish Church in Rabat from 1873 and for the Arch-Confraternity of St Joseph at the church of S. Maria di Gesù, also in Rabat, from 1876.⁹

The popularity of the Cannatacis can also be gauged from the numerous reliquaries, pendant

lamps and other liturgical objects which they produced for various churches in Malta, epitomising their approach to silvermaking. Their works are marked by a pronounced ornateness and a bulky upper structure, constructed on concave and convex bases, and also by repetitive passages which can be seen in the various examples. One of Roberto Cannataci's most ambitious works is the large silver sanctuary lamp for Żejtun Parish Church which he produced in 1896, the date conspicuously engraved on the artefact (fig. 3). Here, Cannataci managed to produce a work of considerable quality, and the craftsmanship is better than that on other artefacts. The style of the lamp is clearly very ornate, and it is not coincidental that it is stylistically related to eighteenth-century Maltese prototypes.

Extravagant woodcarving from two Valletta workshops

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the name of Paolo Bugeja (1840–1908) was certainly much renowned among the churches of Malta. His recently identified oeuvre reveals a carver who was in constant demand, working from his Valletta workshop located at No. 105 Strada Vescovo with his two assistants: his younger brother Calcedonio (1852–1936) and the carver Antonio Sapiano (1858–1924). Bugeja's style is distinguished by heavily rolled scrolls conspicuously crowning cornices and enriched mouldings which tend to be bulky and with

⁸ Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 193–201.

⁹ Details in Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 195–196.

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Figure 3.

A silver sanctuary lamp from the St Catherine of Alexandria Parish Church in Żejtun, Malta, made by Roberto Cannataci Falzon in 1896.

a strong architectural presence. The typology of his leaves, usually tapering to a spiky end, finds parallels in the works of Nicola Zammit, by whom he was clearly influenced.

Bugeja is known to have collaborated with the island's leading designers, including Nicola Zammit and Cesare Galdes, and he had also participated in the London Colonial and Indian Exhibition

of 1886.¹⁰ The body of works he and his workshop produced is vast: he was responsible for the creation of numerous items of church furniture such as

¹⁰ On Paolo Bugeja and his workshop, see Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 202–216; Sagona, *The Nadur Basilica in Gozo*, 153–155; Mark Sagona, "The process of invention: nineteenth century ornamental drawings for Malta", in *International Perspectives on the Decorative Arts: Nineteenth-century Malta*, ed. Mark Sagona (Malta: Midsea Books, 2021), 83.

altar canopies, processional pedestals, antependia and candlesticks, alongside other works of a secular nature. Bugeja was probably the most ornate of his contemporaries and some of his works are a veritable explosion of ornamental profusion, such as the gilt-wood antependium which is erected on the altar of the Holy Crucifix during the feast of the Virgin of Sorrows at Mosta Parish Church.¹¹

Bugeja's most characteristic works include the cover of the baptismal font at St Paul's Shipwreck church, Valletta, produced in 1894 at the height of his career;¹² the impressive gilt-wood altar canopies for the Parish Churches of Xewkija and Għarb in Gozo; the processional gilt-wood pedestal for the titular statue of SS Peter and Paul at Nadur; and the superbly-carved pelmets above the portals of the churches of S. Maria di Gesù, Rabat (fig. 4), and St George, Qormi, produced in 1882 and 1893, respectively.

Another contributor who established himself in the 1890s was the little-known Carmelo Teuma (ca. 1869–1916), who worked from his Valletta workshop, coincidentally situated also in Strada Vescovo. A splendid example of his Rococo Revival work is the signed ornate case for the effigy of the Ecce Homo at St Paul's Shipwreck church, Valletta, dating from

1895. This is a splendidly carved work which displays a thorough mastery of the Rococo language and exceptional skill in the passages of inlaid brass and silver.¹³

Baroque Revival from Italy

The tendency for the ornate in the decorative arts in Malta also received a significant impetus through the presence of the Calabrian sculptor and stuccoist Vincenzo Cardona (active ca. 1880–1920), who sometimes sent works over to Malta from Catania, before eventually settling on the island. Cardona's name is best known for his stucco decoration of the Palazzo Parisio in Naxxar, which he executed together with his students and his compatriot Giulio Moschetti (1847–1910) in the first decade of the twentieth century, under the direction of the important Italian architect Carlo Sada (1849–1924),¹⁴ in what is Malta's most important secular manifestation of the Baroque Revival (fig. 5). Another well-documented commission by Cardona was the stucco decoration on the inside of the dome at the Valletta Dominican church, completed in 1898.¹⁵

11 Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 214.

12 Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 205.

13 Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 235.

14 Frederica Agius, "The decorative programme at Palazzo Parisio, Naxxar" (B.A.(Hons.) dissertation, Department of History of Art, University of Malta, 2012).

15 Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 217.

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Figure 4.

A gilt-wood pelmet from S. Maria di Gesù church in Rabat, Malta, by Paolo Bugeja (1882).
Photo by Charles Paul Azzopardi.

Cardona was also involved in the design and manufacture of church furniture, showing the impact that this gifted artist had on the Maltese art scene through his powerfully decorative idiom. Recent records of his involvement in the ecclesiastical field in the very early 1880s is thus of major consequence, since it shows that the master already had a tangible bond with the island much before his employment by the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures

and Commerce in the 1890s. There, he instilled his typical brand of crisp ornament in his students that included the notable Francesco Saverio Sciortino (1875–1958) and Emanuele Buhagiar (1876–1962). The set of six gilt-wood candlesticks and accompanying altar cross for the altar of St Vincent Ferreri at the Valletta Dominican church, produced in 1881, and his later processional bier of the Dead Christ at Xaghra Parish Church in Gozo, for which he was paid in 1916–

17,¹⁶ are among his most important contributions to the ecclesiastical field in Malta.

Ornamental heaviness at the turn of the twentieth century

Cospicua-born Abramo Gatt (1863–1944) was the most gifted Maltese designer of his generation and epitomised the design climate that existed in Malta in this period, also seen in the works of his contemporary Giuseppe Decelis (1866–1958). Gatt's artistic language is characterised by a distinct visual richness, a variety of ornamental forms and solidly grasped decoration which is applied with maturity and breadth of vision. Gatt betrays a penchant for ornamental heaviness and the occasional *horror vacui* approach fits precisely within the subject of this chapter. This notwithstanding, his decorative intensity is generally controlled through a disciplined underlying structure which makes his design solutions convincing and artistically valid. This master came to establish a strong reputation for his design of liturgical *objets d'art*, church furniture and all kinds of decoration, and many churches across the islands sought his services. It is also significant that Gatt's works were appreciated abroad, with the Milanese

firm Antonio Ghezzi & Figlio significantly including several of his works in its official catalogue of 1908.¹⁷

The 1892 design for the Virgin of the Rosary silver antependium at the Parish Church of St George at Qormi is the work of Gatt's early mature period. It is also possibly the first produced by Ghezzi of Milan. The Baroque flavour is clear in its strongly decorative and festive character and anticipates the intensely ornate silver antependium designed by Gatt in 1900 for the altar of St Mark at Cospicua Parish Church (fig. 6). This is the most exuberant of Gatt's antependia. The entire scheme, crowned by the winged lion of St Mark, is an unbridled array of ornamental forms. The heaviness of the work is accentuated by the close repetition of consoles in the form of winged cherub heads with hanging festoons, the shells in the niches and the octagonal columns hung with multifarious ornaments and vine tendrils. The result is a decidedly extravagant Baroque quality which has a restless effect on the eye.¹⁸

¹⁶ [X]agħra [P]arish [A]rchives, *Esito della Ven. Lampada e Legati Annessi di C. Caccia 1870*, p. 206.

¹⁷ On Abramo Gatt: Mark Sagona, "The Designs of Abramo Gatt, Francesco Saverio Sciortino, Emanuele Buhagiar and Giuseppe Galea for the churches of Gozo" (B.A.(Hons.) dissertation, Department of History of Art, University of Malta, 1999); Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts", 219–226.

¹⁸ Both works are discussed in Sagona, "The ecclesiastical decorative arts",

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Figure 5.

Stucco decoration in the Salon of the Palazzo Parisio in Naxxar, Malta, designed by Carlo Sada, Vincenzo Cardona, Giulio Moschetti and their assistants in c. 1905 and completed in 1907. Photo by Charles Paul Azzopardi.

Conclusion

The Baroque Revival in Malta was symptomatic of the international zeitgeist at the turn of the century. Although there are absolutely no hints of the more progressive design currents which were already manifesting themselves at the time, one should not forget that the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900, at the height of the French *belle époque*, included Rococo Revival furniture pieces which stood side by side with examples of the nascent Art Nouveau.¹⁹ Additionally, these works definitely drew on the Roman Catholic ethos, a context which, for obvious reasons, was still immersed in Revivalism and Historicism. This is exemplified by the works exhibited at the *Esposizione Vaticana* held in Rome in the late 1880s. The Baroque Revival was further confirmation of Malta's European calling in terms of its design and decorative arts in the late nineteenth century. //

¹⁹ Stephen Escritt, *Art Nouveau* (London-New York: Phaidon Press Ltd, 2000), 21.

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Figure 6.

A silver antependium from the Altar of St Mark in the Immaculate Conception Parish Church in Cospicua, Malta, designed by Abramo Gatt and an unidentified Milanese (?) firm in 1900 and manufactured in 1901. Photo by Abner Cassar.

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Home-making: Nostalgia and the Country House Style

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ABSTRACT

“Nostalgia” —or the “longing for home”—engages time and space in a complex dialectic that invokes, simultaneously, a return to and a striving towards some indeterminate place. A selective orchestration of memory and imagination, it dodges concrete form while pretending to create it, being a consequence of, rather than an impetus for, a longed for ideal. The distinction between space and place—between that volume through which time passes and that ideal which passes through time—has reshaped the discourse of humanist geography. It has also complicated our understanding of “home” and the relevance of interior decoration. This paper addresses the role of “home-making” as a response to nostalgia manifest in the Country House Style. A creation of the Virginia-born tastemaker, Nancy Lancaster (1897–1994), the style was rooted in the Colonial Revival and the Lost Cause. Part history, part fantasy, it sought to ameliorate the unsettling implications of war and the consequences of rapid social and economic change through the creation of environments whose location, materials, and human activity corresponded with an “organized world of meaning” compatible with the self—a place called home. This appealed not only to American audiences but to Britons. Through Lancaster’s partner, John Fowler (1906–1977), it was adopted by the National Trust during the 20th century to preserve and mediate the experience of Britain’s disappearing country-house heritage.

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Fig. 1.

Mirador, Greenwood, Albemarle County, Virginia, 1926.

Photograph by Frances Benjamin Johnson. Image courtesy of Carnegie Survey of the Architecture of the South, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

In his landmark architectural treatise titled *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962) observed that “the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind” and concluded by stating that “the house remodels man.”¹ Bachelard’s theory emphasized the ways in which the situation, attributes, and choreography of architecture inform human experience, but his argument also applies to interior decoration. Decades prior to Bachelard’s 1958 publication, the Virginia-born taste maker Nancy Perkins Lancaster (1897–1994) had conceived a formula for interior decoration that satisfied her nostalgic “longing for home” by resisting the forces of *time* and *space* through *place*-making.

The distinction between *space* and *place*—between the *volume* through which time passes and a *construct* that passes through time—has reshaped the discourse of humanist geography.² No longer a physical pause on the number line of time, *place* has assumed new relevance as the embodiment of

selective histories and/or fantasies whose collective worldview serves to orient the Self.³ As John Urry has described, “there is no past out there or back there. There is only the present, in the context of which the past is being continually re-created.”⁴ To that end, Lancaster created a “Country House” style based on a classical agrarian paradigm inspired by a narrative of the “Old South” culled of slavery and abuses of power. Denying the adverse implications of industrialization, urbanization, and legislative reforms while embracing modern conveniences, the narrative was supported by a material culture of glazed paint colors, faded textiles, Georgian furniture, oil paintings, natural firelight, candles, and flowers. Its cornerstone was *Mirador* (fig. 1).⁵

Located 18 miles west of Charlottesville in Albemarle County, Virginia, *Mirador* began as an 863-acre farm and grist mill called *Millburne*. In 1835, its original owner, William Ramsay (1749–1825), sold the plantation to James Bowen (1793–1880), a prosperous merchant and tobacco farmer who transformed the estate’s single-story wood-frame house into a

1 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (1958; Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 6, 47.

2 See John A. Agnew, “Space and Place,” in *The Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*, ed. John A. Agnew and David N. Livingstone (London: Sage, 2011), 316–60; Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 11, 14; and Allan Pred, “Place as Historically Contingent Process: Structuration and the Time-Geography of Becoming Places,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 74, no. 2 (June 1984): 279.

3 Svetlana Boym, “Nostalgia and Its Discontents,” *The Hedgehog Review* (Summer 2007): 8–9.

4 John Urry, “How Societies Remember the Past,” in *Theorising Museums*, eds. S. Macdonald and G. Fyfe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 48, quoted in Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Routledge, 2006), 58.

5 Robert Becker, *Nancy Lancaster: Her Life, Her World, Her Art* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 3, 135–6; Boym, “Nostalgia,” 12.

Greek Revival mansion. With its commanding vista of the Blue Ridge Mountains, he renamed the farm “El Mirador” from the Spanish for “magnificent view.” Over the next two decades, the farm and its owner prospered. By 1860, the estate had grown to 4,000 acres and Bowen’s real and personal property had swollen to \$140,000.⁶

Bowen’s financial comfort complemented the Jeffersonian ideal of the gentleman farmer whose virtue is premised on financial independence and self-sufficiency, an ideology that appealed to Lancaster.⁷ Yet Bowen’s prosperity was not to last. A decade later, his wealth was less than twenty percent of its pre-Civil War (1861–1865) value, putting pressure on his Jeffersonian identity.⁸ Writing to a friend, Bowen requested a shipment of nails for making changes to the property, conceding, “I find negro labour done with and we must get white la-

bour. . . I am building dwelling houses on my land for tenants and renting out small farms, from one to two hundred acres.”⁹ By 1870, Bowen’s farm was reduced to 1,300 acres, less than half of it improved. Moreover, having converted arable land to staple crops, he no longer had a ready cash source. As his social, economic, and political influence declined, *Mirador* likewise deteriorated. Following his death in 1880, Bowen’s heirs struggled to maintain the property, parceling off additional lands until forced to sell the estate altogether.

Enter Chiswell Dabney Langhorne (1843–1919), who purchased *Mirador* and its remaining 165 acres for \$9,000 in 1892. The son of a prosperous Lynchburg, Virginia, miller, C.D. Langhorne had emerged from the Civil War a “penniless” 22-year-old veteran “with a trunk of Confederate ... money, an unworkable plantation and a ... flour mill ruined by being a Confederate Hospital for four years.”¹⁰ In 1864, Langhorne married the 16-year-old Nancy Witcher Keene (1847–1903) of Danville, Virginia, and over the next twenty years worked various jobs—night clerk, piano salesman, tobacco auctioneer—while his wife

6 1860 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., Provo, UT, 2009. [Detail: Year: 1860; Census Place: St. Anne’s Parish, Albemarle, Virginia; Roll: M653_1331; Page 638; Image 288; Family History Library Film: 805331].

7 Fanny Starr Bowen Funsten Castleman, “El Mirador,” 1925(?), TMS, 1, *Land Papers*, 1635–1950, Accession #6589, -a, -b, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA, 1, quoted in Andrew Kohr, *Hidden Jewel: The Mirador Landscape, Greenwood, Virginia: a Report Documenting the History of the Mirador Landscape and Its Six Generations of Owners* (Richmond: The Garden Club of Virginia, 2004), 8; Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 70.

8 1870 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., Provo, UT, 2009. [Detail: Year: 1870; Census Place: Samuel Miller, Albemarle, Virginia; Roll: M593_1631; Page 489A; Image 449; Family History Library Film: 553130].

9 James Bowen, Mirador, Va, to Charles Palmer [Richmond, Va], 10 November 1865, *Palmer Family Papers*, 1782–1894, Sections 1–2, Virginia Historical Society.

10 Alice Moncure Perkins Winn, *Three Centuries of Virginia Ancestors* (Richmond, VA: Virginia Historical Society, rev. 1988), np, quoted in Kohr, *Hidden Jewel*, 15.

gave birth to eleven children. The growing family shared rental quarters with Langhorne's parents and assorted relatives for a decade until Langhorne had sufficient funds to purchase a plot and build a four-room house. It was not until after the family's move to Richmond in 1881 that Langhorne's fortunes changed. In 1885, a fellow veteran found him a contractor's position with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. Ironically, it was this industrial engine of the Gilded Age that underwrote the purchase of *Mirador* and the synchronized restoration of the mansion and its master.

Originally intended as a summer retreat for Langhorne's large family, *Mirador* had become the family's principal residence by 1894. Its remodeling coincided with the American Renaissance movement famously celebrated at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Invoking the classical principles of the eighteenth century, the style was championed for urban and country residences by domestic architectural firms such as Delano and Aldrich. The evolution of *Mirador* from classical elegance to post-war decay to country house grandeur was in keeping with its patrons' aspirations. Whereas Bowen's improvements identified him with Jefferson's independent and virtuous farmer, Langhorne's modifications were inspired by a "Lost Cause" narrative in which the Virginia gentleman was conflated with the storied Cavalier. To that end, Langhorne imbibed the social, economic, and po-

litical aspirations of his forebears and projected them onto a new era, reinventing the antebellum farm as a picturesque country estate and identifying himself as a "sportsman and gentleman of the Old Virginia School."¹¹

This throwback to an earlier era, to "what they remembered as a better moment," was recalled by Lancaster in her 1996 interview with Robert Becker, the content of which has been used throughout this paper. As she described it, the "nostalgia for the simplicity, surety and enchantment of the Virginia they had known as children" resonated in "the rooms" they created, which were "instilled... with memories of the dreamlike time and culture made extinct a quarter-century before by the Civil War."¹² That memory shaped modifications to the estate. In addition to adding two wings to the house, C. D. Langhorne tore down the estate's slave cabins and tenant houses and built two wooden cottages for house servants. While the earlier brick wall remained, the old farm gate was replaced by a stone arch inscribed "Mirador" that invited visitors down a boxwood-bordered path to a reconfigured Federal-style porch boasting a refurbished front door and

11 Obituary, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Saturday, February 15, 1919, quoted in Alice Winn, *Always a Virginian: The Colorful Langhorne's of Mirador, Lady Astor, and Their Kin* (Fredericksburg, VA: Kenmore Assoc., Inc., 1982), 120.

12 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 23.

fashionable fanlight. Other changes followed. In place of an old red barn, Langhorne added a brick stable and a kennel for foxhounds, replaced a kitchen garden with roses and apple trees, and converted the old kitchen house into a guest cottage. It was in this cottage that Nancy Perkins was born in 1897 to Langhorne's eldest daughter, Elizabeth Dabney Langhorne (1867–1914), and her husband Thomas Moncure Perkins (1861–1914).

Compared to *Mirador*, the Perkins home in Richmond, Virginia, was a modest structure. Nancy described the exterior as “hideous” but admired her mother’s Colonial Revival interiors. Like many of the “Old Virginia School,” the Perkins preferred the retrospective style to the opulent Victoriana emerging with the South’s economic revival. As Lancaster recalled, Elizabeth Perkins “was mad about what you call Colonial furniture... My father would say, ‘Why must we have all this furniture in the house?’ She would reply, ‘I’m getting ready for my house in the country.’ She always wanted a house in the country....”¹³

The location of the Perkins house was also significant. Situated at 409 West Franklin Street, it was just eleven blocks from the 707 East Franklin Street residence where Nancy’s distant cousin, General

Robert E. Lee (1807–1870), retired after Appomattox.¹⁴ The family connection was displayed in a coat of arms at the neighboring home of her paternal grandmother, Alice Lee Moncure Perkins (1836–1915), at 414 W. Franklin Street. Alice Perkins fueled her granddaughter’s imagination of the antebellum era with tales of the Perkins’ plantation *Merrywood* in Buckingham County, Virginia, “before the war.”¹⁵ As her grandmother described it, by the end of the hostilities, “Merrywood was exactly like *Gone with the Wind*.” Without money or labor to support it, and “a husband crippled in the war,” *Merrywood* experienced the “same poverty, the same struggle, the carpetbaggers, Yankee Reconstruction” of Margaret Mitchell’s fictional *Tara*, forcing the Perkins family to relocate to Richmond.¹⁶

The Civil War was a landmark moment in Lancaster’s place-making. “My Gibson cousins from up North didn’t know a thing about the Civil War,” she remarked, “but we were fed on it like mother’s milk. To us that war seemed just around the corner.”¹⁷

14 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 71.

15 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 65. Nancy Perkins’ family home site is now the property of the Commonwealth Club. Alice Lee Moncure Perkins lived at 414 W. Franklin Street. The Perkins family plantation was named in honor of Alice’s mother-in-law, Mildred Walker Merry Perkins (1794–1841), and was later called *Solitude*.

16 Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1936); Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 66.

17 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster* 53.

13 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 51.

The romance of the “Lost Cause,” and the sanitized ideal of a gracious and civilized rural South struggling against the vulgar intrusion of a money-grabbing urban North, blurred the lines between memory and imagination, prompting even the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax, to see in *Mirador* an image of the “old South.”¹⁸ The ideal was nurtured by her mother and grandmother who recalled their visits to Virginia plantations such as *Rosewell*, *Brandon*, and *Monticello*, each of which had deteriorated over the centuries. Commissioned by Mann Page in 1721, *Rosewell* took two decades to complete before its legendary grandeur nearly bankrupted the family. Boasting a staircase “so wide you could drive a four-in-hand up the steps” and “a pond on the roof where Thomas Jefferson and Governor Page used to fish,” *Rosewell* “was just holding on” by the time Nancy turned ten and a fire destroyed all but its outside walls (fig. 2). Years later, those walls were still standing, “covered in ivy and vines in the middle of a field of cattle grass.”¹⁹

The dignified decay of *Rosewell* was also found at *Brandon* and *Monticello*. After three centuries of family ownership, *Brandon* enchanted Lancaster with its faded elegance and the romanticism of a “family barely holding on,” their desperation clear-

ly marked by a “rickety sign on the gate saying \$1 TO COME INSIDE....”²⁰ *Monticello* faced similar circumstances. Recalling a photograph from her childhood, Lancaster pointed to its “dereliction” as what “moved me about all the houses in Virginia.... It’s a grainy, black-and-white picture, and it shows the devastation of disuse. But it shows its dignity as well.... All of these houses were like enormous Sleeping Beauties, undisturbed by wealth or fashion.”²¹

The old Virginia homes recalled a way of life whose worldview served as a palliative for Lancaster’s “nostalgia for the past,” a “longing for home” that, she admitted, “was the strongest drive in me.”²² Their ambience informed her ideal of beauty and the material culture she chose in crafting the Country House style. As she explained it, “The stories and houses have gripped me since I was a child; and they influenced my idea of beauty ... more than anything else ever has.” She went on: “I wasn’t as interested in the houses as I was in their ambience. In the furniture, in the history, in the garden. You never really could put your finger specifically on whatever created beauty, it was too illusive, but houses were

18 Wood, *Nancy*, 29.

19 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 66–67.

20 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 68–69.

21 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 72.

22 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 115.

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Fig. 2.

Rosewell, White Marsh, Gloucester County, Virginia, 1937.

Photograph by John O. Bostrup. Image courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

where I found it the most.”²³

In 1920, Nancy wed her second husband Ronald Tree (1897–1976) and, two years later, the couple purchased *Mirador*.²⁴ To amend the nineteenth century structure to a “more colonial appearance,” the Trees hired William Delano (1874–1960), who restored the front portico’s original design and added an arcaded basement—à la Mount Vernon—to support an enclosed porch in the rear.²⁵ The remodel selectively blended old and new. Without disturbing “Mrs. Bowen’s ghost,” modern conveniences were added. Retaining much of her grandparents’ furniture, including “all the mahogany four-poster beds in the bedrooms and a lot of the same tables and chairs,” she simply reinvented their aged look with “new upholstery and curtains made of different patterns and colors of chintz.... But only old chintz. Old chintz fit the mood of the house; I wanted the feeling that it hadn’t been decorated at all, just lived in” (fig. 3).²⁶ She also kept “a basket of lady apples on the hall table in the house, just as my grandparents had.”²⁷ Ultimately, grandeur, decay, and comfort merged, melding with the surrounding landscape as

though sinking back into time: “I remember thinking I was living very much the same life that my father’s mother led.”²⁸

Lancaster’s appreciation for Georgian architecture, the agrarian landscape, and the romanticism of decaying interiors served as the foundation for the Country House style, whose development coincided with related events in Britain. By the end of World War I, a phenomenon since dubbed the “lost houses” had generated the demolition of approximately 2,000 rural estates. The destruction caused a “reactionary nostalgia” that retroactively imbued the remaining estates with newfound importance as sacred British heritage.²⁹ The similarities were noted by Lancaster.

When I was a child, Virginia houses were still occupied by the descendants of the people who had built them in the eighteenth century. Many of them were ramshackle...; that was their beauty.... They had

23 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 64–6, 119, 267; Smith, *Heritage*, 64.

24 Wood, *Nancy*, 18.

25 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 123.

26 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 118–119, 121–122.

27 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 131.

28 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 123–4, 267.

29 Boym argues that “Nostalgia as a historical emotion came of age during the time of Romanticism and is coeval with the birth of mass culture. In the mid-nineteenth century, nostalgia became institutionalized in national and provincial museums, heritage foundations, and urban memorials. The past was no longer unknown or unknowable. The past became ‘heritage’. The rapid pace of industrialization and modernization increased the intensity of people’s longing for the slower rhythms of the past, for social cohesion and tradition. Yet this obsession with the past revealed an abyss of forgetting and took place in inverse proportion to its actual preservation.” Boym, “Nostalgia,” 13. See also Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7–24.

Home-making: Nostalgia and the Country House Style

Susan J. Rawles



Fig. 3.

Sitting Room, Mirador, Greenwood, Albemarle County, Virginia, 1926.

Photograph by Frances Benjamin Johnson (1864–1952). Image courtesy of Carnegie Survey of the Architecture of the South, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

once been very grand, but the war and agricultural depression changed all that.... You get the same sense in some English houses, the sense of survival of the fittest, of hanging on against everything... time, circumstance, progress. It was the most romantic thing in the world to me.³⁰

Lord Halifax concurred, finding in *Mirador* “the atmosphere... of England in the 1860s.”³¹

Nancy’s influence on British interior design began in 1926, when the Trees relocated to England.³² By that time, she had absorbed the lessons of Ogden Codman (1863–1951), co-author of the celebrated design manual *The Decoration of Houses* (1897). Codman had extrapolated the essence of seventeenth to eighteenth century classicism into a modern taste whose simple arrangements, restrained forms, and elegant decorative treatments were imbibed by Nancy during the Tree’s lease of his New York townhouse. On that foundation she added her own brand of comfort. She was famous for installing modern heating and en suite bathrooms in drafty English houses, but she also included large and loosely upholstered sofas and club chairs—an air of informality more country than town. Her purpose was not so much to recreate an antebellum

estate as to distill and project its romantic ambience. Her first British project was *Kelmarsh Hall* in Northamptonshire, a house the Trees leased from Captain Claude Granville “Jubie” Lancaster (1899–1977) in 1926 (fig. 4).³³ The arrangement suited both parties; over a ten-year lease, the Trees “would decorate and modernize the house in lieu of paying rent.”³⁴

Kelmarsh attracted Nancy for being “untouched” by time, for its “stamp of history,” and its organic relationship with the landscape, qualities it shared with Virginia plantations.³⁵ As she described it, “Kelmarsh didn’t sit in a park like many houses in England.... I don’t like parks, I like life. I like seeing animals around. I like real country.”³⁶ Unlike many women of her socio-economic position, Nancy chose to decorate the antiquated house herself, which claimed limited plumbing and no electricity.³⁷ With the help of Mrs. Guy Bethel and a host of skilled craftsmen, painters, seamstresses, and others, she created her British version of the Country House style with painted and antique furniture, aged wallpaper, colorful paint, fresh curtains and

30 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 65–66.

31 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 132–134.

32 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 78–79, 86, 92–96, 104, 106–109.

33 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 139–41.

34 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 151.

35 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 152–154.

36 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 155.

37 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 155–158.

furnishings, simple or elegant carpets, and relaxed seating (fig. 5). Her collection of “old, faded fabrics and mellow colours” was supplemented by new ones she purposefully faded by draping them out in the sun or staining them with tea so that they would “go shabby and live a life of their own.”³⁸ To offset any tinge of the *nouveau*, she added the unexpected—be it an element of humor or something “off” like a carpet the color of a “dead mouse.” Once she installed central heating and en suite bathrooms, she added “the three things that were essential to me in any room: real candlelight, wood fires and lovely flowers. Those were my tricks. ...”³⁹

By the close of the 1920s, any semblance of the pre-war world was falling victim to economic depression, and in 1933 the Trees departed the world of the Pytchley Hunt and moved to *Ditchley Park* in Oxfordshire, where Ronald Tree progressed his political career as a Member of Parliament.⁴⁰ Though Nancy felt the house was too grand as a family home, she had been intrigued by its historical associations with Virginia.⁴¹ “The Lees in Virginia were from the same family; there was even a house called

Dytchley that one of Robert E. Lee’s cousins built...”⁴² Upon completion of the extensive remodelling, *Ditchley* was pronounced by James Lees-Milne, a co-founder of Britain’s National Trust, as “perfection.... I have never seen better taste. Nothing jars. Nothing is too sumptuous or new.”⁴³

In 1948, Nancy joined a coterie of society decorators bringing their taste to the commercial public. Purchasing the majority interest in Colefax and Fowler from Lady Sybil Colefax (1874–1950), she became business partners with the firm’s principal artisan and historian, John Fowler (1906–1977). Fowler, who had apprenticed in furniture restoration and was a devotee of seventeenth and eighteenth century design, was sympathetic to Lancaster’s aesthetic formula. As the company’s business manager, he combined it with his own famous “dress-maker” details in commissions for carriage-trade patrons. He also became a consultant to the National Trust, and it was in this capacity that Lancaster’s vision was projected onto the heritage of a nation.

Although the Trust had been acquiring important sites since 1895, the pressure to preserve and restore Britain’s “lost houses” had escalated in the post-war years and, in 1937 and 1939, Parliament extended the Trust’s powers to protect the architect-

38 Martin Wood, *Nancy Lancaster: English Country House Style* (London: Frances Lincoln, Ltd., 2005), 60.

39 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 158–177, quoted from p. 161.

40 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 187–190.

41 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 196–201.

42 Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 191–192.

43 Quoted in Becker, *Nancy Lancaster*, 196, footnote 12.

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Fig. 4.

West-facing entrance, Kelmarsh Hall, Northampton, England.

Author's photograph.

ture and artifacts of the remaining estates through gift or purchase. To preserve their sense of historic continuity, it also encouraged the resident families to remain as tenants and continue in their traditions of agriculture, sport, and forestry. The goal was to maintain a sense of “living history” so that visitors could engage in the collective memory of Britain’s country-house heritage. To that end, too, John Fowler was hired to advise on interiors whose ambiance was evocative of this historic continuum.

Ultimately, the narratives of the Lost Cause and Lost Houses converged in a country house paradigm that championed an agrarian ideal born of memory and imagination, and the results were embraced by diverse audiences without direct experience of its traditions. Though the practice of visiting country houses dates back centuries—Jane Austen refers to it in her early nineteenth century novels—the first wave coincided with the Gilded Age, when the shift in social, economic, and political authority away from rural to urban life fueled a romanticized appreciation for the country’s real and imagined traditions. According to a study in *The Uses of Heritage*, more than 85% of National Trust visitors valued their country house experience because it restored their sense of place “in this modern restless world.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Smith, *Heritage*, 115–161, particularly 139, 141, 149–151.

If the country house and its style served to mediate and reconcile the sense of estrangement among visitors caused by a dislocating present, the experience suggests that nostalgia’s “longing for home” is really a “longing to belong.”⁴⁵ To that end, Nancy Lancaster used the tools of restorative nostalgia to impart to *time* and *space* the essence of a *place* called home.⁴⁶ She did so to shape—and so control—an unknown future for, as Bachelard reminds us, “We bring our *lares* with us.”⁴⁷ //

⁴⁵ Boym, “Nostalgia,” 16–17. See also Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 17, 41, 102.

⁴⁶ Boym distinguishes between reflective and restorative nostalgia, arguing that “Restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* (home) and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home.” She goes on: “To understand restorative nostalgia, it is important to distinguish between the habits of the past and the habits of the *restoration* of the past ... There are two paradoxes here. First, the more rapid and sweeping the pace and scale of modernization, the more conservative and unchangeable the new traditions tend to be. Second, the stronger the rhetoric of continuity with the historical past and emphasis on traditional value, the more selectively the past is usually presented. ... It builds on the sense of loss of community and cohesion and offers a comforting collective script for individual longing.” Boym, “Nostalgia,” 13–14. Eric Hobsbawm describes restorative nostalgia in terms of “new traditions” as opposed to “age-old ‘custom’” in Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 2, cited in Boym, “Nostalgia,” 14.

⁴⁷ Bachelard, *Poetics*, 5.

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Fig. 5.
Sitting Room, Kelmarsh Hall, Northampton, England.
Author's photograph.

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Progressive Retrospectivity in Hungarian Ceramics

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates why it makes sense for designers in the 21st century to revive ceramic traditions and how these methods support contemporary values. It examines the Geoform series (2020) by Zsuzsanna Sinkovits, a Hungarian ceramic designer who combines the sculptural and functional aspects of objects in her art pieces, and Criminal Craft, a Budapest-based collective of young, emerging ceramists who are passionate about wood-fired pottery. The works of these artists represent a conspicuous reconsideration of ancient techniques and forms as well as being characteristic features of the mid-century modern style.

Sinkovits's Geoform series, a ceramic paraphrase of geological formations, consists of crawl-glazed pieces that evoke some of the outstanding creations of Géza Gorka (1895–1971). Criminal Craft is held together by common interests rather than a concrete manifesto, but its shared values predominate over individual styles. The community has also been influenced by Gorka's heritage, as their first name (Verőce Super Group) indicates.

Even though these ceramics are particularly made for utilitarian purposes, the designers often rediscover the field of "studio ceramics" or encroach on the fine arts. The manner in which they enrich these genres with a promising and innovative artistic approach is intriguing.

The paper ends by exploring how the artworks created by Hungarian artists relate to international trends or tendencies and what novelties they throw up in the contemporary design scene.

Progressive Retrospectivity in Hungarian Ceramics

Melinda Farkasdy

In Hungary, like other former Eastern Bloc countries, “Nostalgia for the East” has been very popular since the 2000s.¹ Vintage shops and online marketplaces overflow with items from the sixties and seventies, even while the wider national public continues to have a negative view of the architecture and design culture of the time due to bad memories of the Kádár era (1956–1988). Young contemporary designers are readily inspired by the material legacy of the Communist era, although some simply follow the trend.

This essay attempts to examine the work of artists who aspire not to imitate forms in a cookie-cutter manner but rather rethink traditions in terms of content. On the one hand, it seeks to discover how the ceramic tradition and applied arts heritage of the last century live on in contemporary Hungarian ceramics. On the other hand, it focuses on how contemporary ceramicists reflect on their environments,

how they evoke the spirit of a place and what sorts of methods they turn to in creating an impression of each domestic landscape. In what way do tradition, location and landscape imagery connect with each other? The work of Criminal Craft, a creative community of young ceramicists, and *Zsuzsanna Sinkovits*² are examined as case studies.

Criminal Craft was founded in 2020. Its nine members³ produce both applied and autonomous ceramics according to similar principles, even amalgamating these two elements within a single object. One aspect that led to the founding of the community was the fact that all the artists are passionate about using wood-fired techniques, which spread in Hungary in the nineteen seventies thanks to the International Ceramics Studio in Kecskemét⁴ and the Ceramics Artist Colony in Siklós.⁵ From the outset, the collective was heavily influenced by the

1 Fruzsina Müller, “Retro Fashion, Nostalgia and National Consciousness: Success of a Revived Shoe Brand from Socialist Hungary” (2007): 1.
On Czech retro nostalgia, see: Irena Reifová, “The Pleasure of Continuity: Re-reading Post-Socialist Nostalgia”, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 21, issue 6 (15 November 2017), 587–602, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877917741693>.
On nostalgia for Polish socialism, see: Christine Esche, Rosa Katharina Mossiah and Sandra Topalska, “Lost and Found: Communism Nostalgia and Communist Chic Among Poland’s Old and Young Generations”, *Humanity in Action Polska* (September 2010), accessed 17 June 2022, https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledge_detail/lost-and-found-communism-nostalgia-and-communist-chic-among-polands-old-and-young-generations

2 A graduate (2021) of the Moholy-Nagy University of the Arts (MOME Budapest).

3 Gabriella Farkas, Bernadett Furó, Maté Kovács, Boglárka Nagy, Ágnes Nagy-György, Eszter Sággy, Róbert Szél, Albert Béla Tamás and András Zsigó.

4 Júlia Néma, *Magas hőfokon égni. Közelítések a fatüzes kerámiához* (Burning at High Temperatures: Approaches to Wood-Fired Ceramics) (Budapest: Scolar Kiadó, 2013): 21.

5 Piroska Novák, “Magas hőfokon égni – Amit a fatüzes kerámiáról tudni kell” (“Burning at High Temperatures – What You Need to Know about Wood-Fired Ceramics”), *Artportal*, (9 September 2013), <https://artportal.hu/magazin/magas-hofokon-egni-amit-a-fatuzes-keramiarol-tudni-kell>

work of two highly renowned Hungarian ceramicists, Géza Gorka (1894–1971) and his daughter Livia Gorka (1925–2011), as referenced by the earlier name of the group (Verőce Super Group). Géza Gorka lived in picturesque Verőce (on the Danube Bend in Northern Hungary) where he worked in his own workshop, which is today a museum (Gorka Ceramics Museum). Prior to establishing their collective, the artists began producing wood-fired ceramics in the courtyard of the museum while they were still university students. In 2013, an agreement was reached between the museum and MOME to establish a creative workshop, whose first step was to build a double-chamber wood-fired kiln.⁶ The collective's subsequent change in name, as well as the fact that it moved its location to Zebegény (not far from Verőce) in 2021, relates to its later change in direction and progress beyond the influence of the Gorkas. In Zebegény, guided by the community's former teacher, ceramic artist Éva Kádasi, it built its own wood-fired kiln and organised a symposium based around the ceramics it created there (Ágasbogas, 2021), continuing the tradition of the Verőce symposia (Homage to Gorka – I. Gorka Szimpózium, 2019 / Duna – II. Gorka

Szimpózium, 2020). However, it did not break definitively with the tradition of 20th-century Hungarian ceramics. Rather, in the case of one of its artists, it expanded it to include regional influences.

It is understandable for young ceramicists to look back readily to the legacy of Géza and Livia Gorka, as they were defining artists in the history of Hungarian ceramics and of international significance. The members of Criminal Craft succeeded in reflecting upon the works of the two ceramicists in a non-clichéd manner and avoided the trap of self-serving retrospectivity, paraphrasing each distinctive gesture, stylistic element and creative period. The objects in the two Gorka Symposia and the ceramics presented at the exhibition in Zebegény are described without any attempt at being exhaustive.⁷ The ceramicists approached the Gorka heritage in versatile ways, each taking their own individuality as the point of departure with very diverse results. That is to say that it was not the aim of the collective to develop a homogenous formal vocabulary. Rather, that they were inclined to strive for communal thinking, and

6 Piroska Novák, "Verőcén új(ra) tüzek gyúlnak. A Gorka Kerámiamúzeum és a Moholy-Nagy Művészeti Egyetem együttműködése" ("New Fires are Burning in Verőce: Collaboration between the Gorka Ceramic Museum and the Moholy-Nagy University of the Arts (MOME)"), *Magyar Iparművészet (Hungarian Applied Arts)*, no. 5 (2014): 18.

7 On the I. Gorka Symposium and the ceramics created for the occasion, see: Piroska Novák, "Erőt sugárzó tárgyak. A kortárs magyar kerámiakultúráról és az autopsziáról az I. Gorka Szimpózium apropóján" ("Objects Radiating Power: On Contemporary Hungarian Ceramic Culture and on the Autopsy, apropos the I. Gorka Symposium"), *Artportal* (23 March 2020), accessed 17 June 2022, <https://artportal.hu/magazin/erot-sugarzo-targyak-a-kortars-magyar-keramiakultural-es-az-autopsziarol-az-i-gorka-szimpozium-apropojan>

to appreciate and support each other's creative approaches.⁸

Ágnes Nagy-György produced a nine-piece series of tiny vases for the I. Gorka Symposium (fig. 1) which evoke the elder Gorka's vases decorated with animal ornamentation. As the central decorative element of the vases, there are echoes of the master's distinctive fish and stag motifs, while on other pieces there are geometric, archaistic patterns – each painted with cobalt-oxide beneath the glaze. It is as if her pair of wheel-like round reliefs in porcelain and wood were a re-thinking of Livia Gorka's chamotte clay sculpture from around 1986 (fig. 2) in the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest. In Gorka's case, the band softly spanning the axis of the circle takes on a more lyrical interpretation, further promoted by the proximity of the raw earth colours to nature. In Nagy-György's sculptures, however, the hardwood inlay splitting one of the fragile porcelains in two, and piercing the centre of the other, comprises more powerful gestures.

Gabriella Farkas's sculpture evoking Stone Age monoliths (2019) also seems to quote Livia Gorka's hand-moulded, block-like series of sculptures entitled *Women* (ca. 1970). Her crawl-glaze porcelain

vase (2019), formally reminiscent of Asian calabash vases, meanwhile refers to Géza Gorka's glazed pottery compositions made using similar methods. Vase forms like these can also be found in Gorka's oeuvre. The master showed crawl-glaze, Habán-style ceramics for the first time at the 1939 New York World's Fair⁹.

Inspired by Géza Gorka's long-necked vases, Róbert Szél created his own version (2019) which became a rustic piece of untreated (earthenware) pottery that was much taller than its predecessor. The archaistic gesture here is not in the decoration (as in Nagy-György's cobalt-oxide patterns) but in the raw, tempered form and its almost ancient quality.

In one piece, a refined, feminine relief (2020), it is as if Bernadett Furó was attempting to create a bird's-eye view of the Danube Bend (fig. 3). The theme of the II. Gorka Symposium was the Danube, and the elementary proximity of this European transcontinental river most definitely impacted the two masters. The imprints of geographical landscapes also appear in Furó's later works, while they take on a central role in the ceramics made at the Zebegény Symposium.

8 Melinda Farkasdy, "Sculptural Values in Clay: Thoughts on the Criminal Craft Community", *Ceramics Now*, (13 October 2020), <https://www.ceramicsnow.org/articles/sculptural-values-in-clay-thoughts-on-criminal-craft-community>

9 Imre Katona, *Gorka Géza* (Budapest: Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata, 1972): 8.



Fig. 1

Embossment pair (2019). Ágnes Nagy-György.

Porcelain, wood, slab pottery, moulding. 40 x 20 x 3 cm.

Photo by Ágnes Nagy-György.

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Fig. 2

Sculpture (1986). Lívia Gorka.

Chamotte clay, high-fired glaze, shaped. 52 x 51 x 11 cm. Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.

Photo by Jonatán Máté Urbán.



Fig. 3

Sculpture (1986). Livia Gorka.

Chamotte clay, high-fired glaze, shaped. 52 x 51 x 11 cm.

Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.

Photo by Jonatán Máté Urbán.

Similar to Ágnes Nagy-György, Boglárka Nagy took Géza and Livia Gorka's animal imagery as her point of departure, inspired in this case not by the ornamentation but rather by the small sculptures. The collection at the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest preserves countless small animal figures from the elder Gorka's oeuvre. Nagy's animal figures are more stylised than their predecessors, and they manifest that humorous, sweetly ironic attitude that is characteristic of the works of the Czech ceramicists of the nineteen sixties and seventies. Nagy spent a semester at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (UMPRUM) in 2019 where she had the opportunity to study with Milan Pekár. The spirit of the Czech masters who taught at the Academy undeniably made an impact on her, and their influence palpably infiltrated her artwork. She appeared at the Zebegény Symposium with characteristic small anthropomorphic sculptures (2021) which can be interpreted as the torsos of female bodies or as blown-up copies of her earlier animal figures. The Zebegény sculptures can be seen as direct predecessors of Boglárka Nagy's graduation piece for her Master of Fine Arts (*Shapes of Women*, 2021, MOME, Budapest) (fig. 4), in which the artist examined how the clay functions as a medium in the discussion on the discourse linked to femininity. In this work, she dissected the 21st-century representation of femininity and supplemented it with hand-formed, anthropomorphic animal figures, thematising the female

gender.¹⁰ Western culture and consumer society correlate hens, cats, frogs and rabbits with femininity and so-called feminine roles. None of these topoi are very flattering, considering the negative connotations associated with them ("hen-witted, cunning cat, ugly frog, Playboy bunny"). The artist removes these animals with pejorative characteristics and in their stead offers us impish, whimsical and lovable figures. Nagy had imagined her series of animal figures as a kind of fairy-tale, analysing herself and expounding her opinions about the femininity of the present era through the sculptures. The method by which she approached the subject matter, as well as her creative intention behind portraying complex female (human) characteristics with animal figures, can be compared with the porcelain animal figures of the Czech ceramicist Pravoslav Rada (1923–2011). Rada's charming little animals, just like Nagy's animal forms, almost speak to us, communicate to each other with their wise humour and, time and time again, "wink" at the viewer. They reveal the ugliest or most fallible human characteristics without judging. The comic, the grotesque and the absurd were a kind of escape route for Czech applied artists and intelligentsia in particular during the years of Communism (1948–1989), allowing them to survive and

¹⁰ Accessed 17 June 2022, <https://diploma.mome.hu/2021/ma/nagy-boglarka>



Fig. 4

Sculpture (1986). Livia Gorka.

Chamotte clay, high-fired glaze, shaped. 52 x 51 x 11 cm. Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.
Photo by Jonatán Máté Urbán.

avoid difficulties and political austerity.¹¹ Nagy's series of ceramics also develops the Hrabalian absurd, as if Páral's¹² idealised, particularly Eastern European, women heroes had dived into animal skins. Her animals are enlarged, asymmetrical and, like Rada's, represent irregular and fallible figures. Her works are also reminiscent of Livia Gorka's animal figures endowed with human features, which were generally black, white or grey;¹³ a feature that she also employs but supplements with red.

While for Nagy ceramics are a tool of expression for her discovery of herself and her sexuality, contemporary ceramic designer Zsuzsanna Sinkovits processes Hungary's landscapes (the North Middle Mountains, Vértessomló, Alföld [the Hungarian Plains] and Kiskunság) in her *Geoform* series (2020). The simple, time-honoured silhouettes of the vases, plates and bowls are built upon the traditional forms of ceramic art (the cone-shaped vase, flat vase and decorative bowl). Sinkovits does not imitate, copy or display her work; the relevance of the individual pieces lies

precisely in the fact that the artist is able to convey through them the character of the given landscape – but not its proverbial character, which is trite and banal to the point of boredom. With this gesture, she actually questions and overrides the cult of the kitsch in contemporary consumer culture, which makes practically every stereotypical landscape its own. Of even more merit is the fact that she is able to break with the romantic allusion, which sees the landscape as a projection of the artist's inner, spiritual world or as a panorama of national history. The latter remains common to the present day and is a speciality of the souvenirs, the porcelain knick-knacks, displayed in vitrines. Sinkovits tries to make the essence of each region palpable – not by imitating the forms of the folk pottery typical of the region but rather by mixing local, base materials into the body and the glaze, through which she creates extraordinarily variegated colours and surface treatments. In this, she is following the example of such acclaimed contemporary artists as Britons Adam Buick and Jennifer Lee and the Danish-Dutch design duo Gerner Jahncke.

Ceramics can also be considered as a kind of mediating art form that creates a connection between man and the natural environment, while establishing a dialogue with the spirit of a place. This creative intention can be compared with the foundations of the American environmental art movement that

11 Rebecca Bell, "Negotiations of Socialist Modernity: The Czech Glass Figurine (From the Late 1940s-1960s)", *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 13:2, 151.

12 Vladimír Páral (b. 1932) is a Czech fiction writer who was active during the communist regime. His work ranges from biting satire to socialist realism.

13 "Gorka Livia", introduction by Miklós Borsos (Keszthely: Balaton Museum non-series publication, 1965), accessed 17 June 2022, https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/MEGY_ZALA_BK_Sk_1965_GorkaLivia/?pg=0&layout=s

blossomed in the 1960s¹⁴ and which arrived in Hungary at the end of the decade, without becoming a defining trend in the fine art of the era.

The reddish-brown decorative plate (fig. 5) symbolises the bauxite mines of the Vértesszőlő mountain range in Western Hungary, whose iron oxide-rich rocks are responsible for the reddish hues. The Alföld (Eastern Hungary) region, the beloved topos of 19th-century Hungarian literature and fine arts, is today a popular tourism attraction due to the Hortobágy National Park. Without indulging in stereotypes, by emphasising the natural values of the region, Sinkovits uses crawl-glaze to represent the fragmented salt-marsh landscape. She visualises the Alföld, which appears like an infinite desert in Hungarian relations, in the narrow, lens-like form of the vase. Géza Gorka also had a predilection for employing crawl-glaze in his compositions (see above), as, prior to him, did Hungary's prominent Zsolnay ceramic factory, founded in Pécs (Southern Hungary) in 1853. The faience and porcelain vases decorated in this style were early masterpieces of its founder Vilmos Zsolnay¹⁵.

The mould for the vase that captures the undulating movement of the Kiskunság quicksand was made by 3D printing. Thanks to the process, the ground that is in perpetual motion evolves into a static, statue-like surface which is further emphasised by the use of understated glaze. The amalgamation of traditional ceramics and the most modern technology is interesting, an attempt to re-think the traditional methods of ceramics.

The vessels the artist produced using the Japanese *nerikomi* technique¹⁶ illustrate the stacked rock strata in the Northern Middle Mountains. The material derives from an abandoned mine in Sámsonháza (Northern Hungary) where rocks in five different colours can be found.

Sinkovits's *Geoform* series (fig. 6) contemplates the landscape in itself. Rather than a nostalgic portrayal, it brings the inner values of our natural environment to the surface and casts their forms. It reflects on the traditions of Hungarian ceramics, while fully connecting to contemporary international trends: traditional techniques allied by virtuoso technique to the most modern procedures. In 2021, the artist won the prestigious National Ceramics Biennial in Pécs in the student category.¹⁷ //

14 Alan Sonfist, ed, *Art in the Land. A Critical Anthology of Environmental Art* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1983): xi.

15 Lajos Nékám, "A pécsi Zsolnay gyár első készítményei és jegyei" ("The First Products and Features of the Zsolnay Factory in Pécs"), *Az Iparművészeti Múzeum Évkönyvei (Museum of Applied Arts Yearbook)*, 12 (1970): 135.

16 Nerikomi, also known as *neriage*, was first created in Japan and involves the stacking of clay in layers and the cutting of coloured pieces to form different patterns.

17 Accessed 17 June 2022, <http://www.icshu.org/Biennale.html>

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Fig. 5

**Bauxite Plate, Geoform collection (2020).
Zsuzsanna Sinkovits.**

Earthenware, pressing. 21 x 21 x 2.5 cm.
Photo by András Kókai.



Fig. 6

Geoform collection (2022). Zsuzsanna Sinkovits.

Bauxite plate replaced with bauxite vase.
Photo by Alianna Albert.

Fit for the King of Portugal: A Pair of Revivalist Sèvres Vases

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ABSTRACT

Some years ago, a paper was presented on a series of 379 Sèvres artworks held at the Palace of Ajuda, including diplomatic gifts, figurines, dinner services, tea services, flower pots, etc., described as "*Quelques petits souvenirs de Sèvres*". These items are proof of the excellence of the ceramics made at the Sèvres factory, which are considered the finest ever produced. But how ambitious were these items? Technical methods evolved around the 2nd half of the 19th century and the results stand out, but when Revivalism became a trend, the diplomatic gifts supplied by Sèvres reached a whole new level. Portraiture, ornaments, mounts, designs, and even iconic shapes embodied the ne plus ultra in gifts from the Emperor of France to the King of Portugal. These items also rotated, so the portraits could be appreciated one by one against their Neo-Gothic background. They were profusely ornamented just like gold cloth.

This paper will examine a pair of magnificent egg-shaped vases with portraits of great figures from the world of literature, science, poetry, etc. As expected, when studying these vases, some parts of the puzzle were missing. The image was, and still is, incomplete. How many artists could have been involved in making works such as these? What method was used to put them together? How did Sèvres bring these Revivalist items to life? The vases showing celebrities from the 16th and 17th centuries arrived in Lisbon in 1855. A century and a half later, they still dazzle and certainly deserve to be under the spotlight. How far do surprises in the decorative arts extend when the style transitions from the Neoclassical to the Neo-Gothic?

Fit for the King of Portugal: A Pair of Revivalist Sèvres Vases

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Fig. 1 and 2

Pair of Vases: Celebrities of the 15th and 16th centuries.

E. Julienne, Sèvres Manufacture, 1849.

Vase 1_106,5 x 63 x Ø 41,24. Underglaze inscription inside neck: "DL 23.2" (PNA 3960).

Vase 2_109 x 60,5 x Ø 40,76. Underglaze inscription inside neck: "DL 22-12" (PNA 3959).

Photo: © Luisa Oliveira / DGPC.

A pair of egg-shaped Sèvres vases was delivered to the Portuguese Court in January 1856. This gift from Napoleon III to King Pedro V (1837–1861) of Portugal was the first of an interesting sequence of nine presents. The young king had just ascended the throne of a country traditionally allied with Britain which obviously did not favour France. The opening of the railway and the consequent industrial development in Portugal, not to mention access to the colonies under Portuguese rule, of obvious interest, were the trigger for a campaign from which Napoleon III hoped to gain financial benefit while displaying his power.

The two vases, a pair from a series which the Emperor Napoleon III referred to as *petits souvenirs de Sèvres*,¹ were sent to King Pedro V as a diplomatic gift. This followed the usual sequence for diplomatic gifts from Sèvres and, like the many other gifts presented to European courts, was part of Napoleon III's political affirmation. Sèvres objects had been highly prized as gifts between courts since the 18th century² (fig. 1, 2).

The “*Deux vases Œuf fond rouge sujet de Figures représentant les célébrités des XVI^e et XVIII^e siècles* [sic]”³ (“Two Egg vases, red ground, with Figures representing 16th and 17th century celebrities”) had entered the shop warehouse on 12th July 1849, according to the account ledger of decorated pieces, valued at 7,500 francs each.⁴ It was only ten years later that they were chosen by the Emperor. Throughout these years, Napoleon III sent gifts to every country he wished to impress. In 1856, the ledger shows gifts were sent to Sweden, Sardinia, Denmark and the minister for the colonies of the Low Countries.⁵

Pedro V ruled for only 5 years, during which he lived in the Palace of Necessidades in Lisbon, where he kept his precious gift in his private apartment. He died young, at the age of 24, from typhoid fever. Upon his death, King Ferdinand of Saxe Cobourg-Gotha, his father, swiftly removed the “*Dois vasos que deu a S. M. El-Rei D. Pedro V o Imp[erador]. Napoleon em 1855*” (“Two vases that were given to His Majesty King Pedro V by the Emperor Napoleon in 1855”),⁶

1 Cristina Neiva Correia, “Quelques petits souvenirs de Sèvres: elementos para o estudo do acervo cerâmico do Palácio Nacional da Ajuda”, *Revista de Artes Decorativas*, issue 2 (Porto: UCP, Escola das Artes, 2008), 85–122.

2 See Camille Leprince (dir.), *Napoléon & Sèvres. L'art de la porcelaine au service de l'Empire*, ebook, 2016; Catherine Granger, *L'empereur et les arts: la liste civile de Napoléon III* (Paris: École nationale des Chartes, 2005); and Tamara Préaud, “A Modest Sèvres Vase for a King”, *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, vol. 37 (2002), 299–303.

3 Manufacture nationale de Sèvres (MNS), Archives, Registre Vbb 12, fl. 13. Albeit registered in the entry book as 16th and 17th century, they are actually 15th and 16th century celebrities, in accordance with the way Julienne titled his drawings.

4 MNS, Archives, Registre Vbb 12, fl. 13.

5 MNS, Archives, Registre Vbb 12, fl. 13.

6 *Relação dos Objectos que El Rei o Senhor D. Fernando levou do Quarto de S. M. El-Rei o Senhor D. Pedro V em 18 de Novembro de 1861* (A List of Objects Removed by King Fernando from His Majesty King Pedro V's Room on 18 November 1861), Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), AHMF, Casa Real, Box 6530.

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Cristina Neiva Correia



Fig. 3

Music room. Necessidades Palace (Lisbon).

João António Madeira, 1886-1892

Albumen print

National Palace of Pena

Inv. PNP3634

Courtesy of (c) PSML

along with other precious objects from his son's rooms. The typhoid pandemic of 1861 was too dangerous and the deceased king's apartments were to remain closed for years to come. Sometime later, the vases were caught in a photograph taken of the music room⁷. (fig. 3)

The pair of vases were included in the important commemorative bicentenary exhibition of Sèvres art in Lisbon in 1938,⁸ along with several other Sèvres items like the *Déjeuner des Amours Divers* (a chocolate service for four [PNA 2521–32]) and a small Etruscan jug in blue and gold (PNA 3946). In 1939, recognised as pieces of great artistic value, the vases were transferred to the Royal Palace of Ajuda. Manuel Cayolla Zagallo, curator of the National Palace of Ajuda, had no doubts as to their importance, for “... não só porque viriam a enriquecer e guarnecer o Palácio como porque aqui estariam em melhores condições de conservação” (“... not only would these enrich and embellish the Palace but they would also be kept in better conditions here”).⁹ Based on these

justifications, the pair of vases joined the Ajuda collections in 1939.

Like any other European palace, the Palace of Ajuda houses numerous vases from Asia, Sèvres, Berlin and Vienna, among other provenances. Vases were, and indeed still are, “cultural icons” and “quintessentially (Neoclassical) in shape”, as Hans Ottomeyer once noted.¹⁰ They acquired, he continues, the importance of sculptures with no functional or utilitarian purpose. They thus became objects of aesthetic enjoyment that offered Neoclassical artists a fascinating object that was adaptable to all sorts of revivals.

Following the excavations and re-discovery of Herculaneum (1738) and Pompeii (1748), classical shapes and decoration became widespread. Besides that, in the second half of the 18th century, the European trend in Etruscan objects and the appeal of the *goût étrusque* in interior design was due to Robert Adam designs, Josiah Wedgwood pottery models and the design drawings of Charles Percier and Pierre François Léonard Fontaine. Although imprecise, “Etruscan” designated a style with flair, much in

7 I would like to thank PSML for the high resolution image and Hugo Xavier, curator at the Pena and Queluz Palaces/PSML, for the discussions on this subject and the identification of the Palace of Necessidades' rooms at different periods in time.

8 “Exposição Comemorativa do Bicentenário da Manufatura Nacional de Sèvres: 1738–1938” (“Exhibition to Commemorate the Bicentenary of the Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres: 1738–1938”), dir. João Couto, Lisbon, Museu das Janelas Verdes, 1938.

9 *Correspondence in the National Palace of Ajuda Archive*, 1939, as listed in the Bibliography section (see “Documentation”).

10 Hans Ottomeyer, “The Metamorphosis of the Neoclassical Vase”, *Vasemania: Neoclassical Form and Ornament in Europe. Selections from the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. William Reider, Stefanie Walker and Hans Ottomeyer (New Haven and London. Published for the Bard Graduate Centre for Studies in the Decorative Arts, New York by Yale University Press, 2004), 15–29

the mood of the time. Classical decoration and ornaments became even more appreciated in the first quarter of the 19th century. By the second quarter, however, Historicist models would gain in popularity, with value being given to the Medieval, Gothic and Renaissance styles. This sort of Historicist “broth” gave way to an almost obligatory item: the Revivalist artistic object.¹¹ This object displayed the 19th century appropriation of these styles rather than being an exact copy.¹² Sèvres excelled at this type of work. Some of these artworks comprised so many different layers – of colours, materials, decorations, ornamental grammar and subjects – that it is not easy or even possible to define them. Together, they helped to convey a specific message: that of the superiority of France in industry, economy, history and art.

When examining the *Celebrities* vases, one must keep in mind that the shape onto which all the decoration would be laid was that of an egg – both the perfect shape and container. For some, it was even an allegory for the world.

Vases had been produced at Sèvres in different but categorised sizes since the 18th century, ranging

from the 4th to the 1st “grandeur”. As they grew in size, they became technically more challenging. Although the scale changed at some point in time, the pair of *Celebrities* vases were made in the 2nd size, measuring circa 1 metre in height.¹³

Contrasting with the deceptive simplicity of the shape, the extensive decoration is sumptuous. It was commissioned from Alexis-Étienne Julienne (so-called Eugène Julienne, ca. 1800–1874) and registered on the ledger as “*Celebrities of the 16th and 17th centuries*”, as mentioned. Julienne started work on these vases in 1846,¹⁴ signing and delivering them three years later in 1849, his last year at the Manufacture where he had worked for over 12 years.

Julienne chose to paint on a muted palette, which renders a reddish or even brownish look to these vases. The ornaments and figures emerge out of a gold ground or are enhanced by gold details and a suggestion of enamels, a clear interpretation of Renaissance and Gothic styles that is often found in the decorative arts of the 19th century. The colours are those of the Renaissance easel painting palette and not that of *majolica* ceramics, which is hardly surprising, but worthy of note, considering that Alexandre Brongniart, the exceptional director of Sèvres,

11 On the Revivalist artworks and styles involved, see *Revivals*. 2020, ed. Anne Dion-Tenenbaum and Audrey Gay-Mazuel. This extremely interesting and elucidating publication compiles the papers from three important seminars in 2015–2018.

12 Jeffrey Munger, “Sèvres porcelain in the Nineteenth Century”, *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, accessed in 2010 @www.metmuseum.org, viewed in 2010.

13 With mounts their exact heights are 109cm (PNA 3959) and 106.5cm (PNA 3960).

14 MNS, Archives, Registre VJ’ 53 (1846), fls 63 ff.

chose portraits of historical figures from easel paintings in the *Musée royal* as inspiration for the porcelain decorations,¹⁵ thus perpetuating important works of art with their original colours.

The pervasive use of gold on these vases is pivotal. Under, over or even around the rich, dense and muted colours, the different shades of gold, gold à l'effet, chiselled, matte and gold grounds for the figures, and, last but not least, gilt bronze Christofle mounts give a golden aura to these perfect eggs. The golden egg was obviously intentional. More so, one must remember, given that gold grounds were used in the Renaissance for God, the Holy family, gods, divinities and heroes. It certainly changed the message here. Among allegories, displayed in neo-Gothic or neo-Renaissance micro-architectures, these were figures to which Julienne, following Brongniart's politics, assured posterity, granting them the aura of heroes. He created a gallery of famous men that clearly aligned with the taste of the time. Founders of the Renaissance ideal, they are either French or Italian, ie from the countries perceived as the birth of the Renaissance. The figures chosen are all male, all richly dressed and sitting for the picture as if posing for a Medici portrait. None, in fact, correspond to

a known portrait or even an expected "old" painting. The attitude, the textiles and the accessories do not match those of that time. It is another interpretation of the Renaissance by a 19th century painter.

A first band of information states the field in which each character excelled, under which each is enclosed in a micro-architecture and its identification. Each module is separated by a Virtue.¹⁶ Styles and motifs overlap, and in bands above and below this main one, one can find *putti* with *candelabræ*, an obvious influence from the *Domus Aurea*, and masks, palms and green men from the ornamental language of Antiquity; lambrequins *en damassé* in the Moresque style; the suggestion of enamels from the Middle Ages; and the already neo-Rococo acanthus complete or used to accessorize Gothic and Renaissance micro-architectures. Clearly, Julienne gave 19th-century Sèvres production "its proclivity to borrow freely from various historical styles and then to either reinterpret these styles or combine them in unprecedented ways."¹⁷

¹⁵ For further reading on Brongniart at Sèvres, see Derek Ostergaard (dir.), *The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory: Alexandre Brongniart and the Triumph of Art and Industry, 1800-1847* (New York: Yale University Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Sequence of Virtues on Vase I (PNA 3960): Science (Galileo Galilei) – Perseverance (Medicine/Ambroise Paré) – Prudence (The Army/Bayard) – Justice (The State/Michel de l'Hôpital) – Harmony (Industry/Gutenberg) – Hope (Art/Michelangelo) – Intelligence.
Sequence of Virtues on Vase II (PNA 3959): Poetry (Ariosto) – Faith (Religion/Charles Borromeo) – Charity (Navigation / Christopher Columbus) – Gratitude (Agriculture/Olivier de Serres) – Fairness (Justice/Mathieu Mole) – Humanity (Commerce/Anco) – Sagacity.

¹⁷ Munger, "Sèvres porcelain", 2000.

The invitation he designed for the 1846 *Exposition des Produits des Manufactures Royales* (Exhibition of Products from the [French] Royal Manufactures) has much the same structure and displays how he was also applying this idea to lithography.¹⁸

A supreme ornamentalist, Julienne did not however work on the decoration of the vases alone. Nevertheless, unsurprisingly, both vases bear only one signature, proudly displayed in upper case characters: “JULIENNE. SÈVRES. 1849”. It was his project, his responsibility and the merit was his alone (fig. 4, 5 and 6).

Had it not been for a note¹⁹ located by Tamara Préaud at the Sèvres archives along with the drawing, a second artist – Gosse – would have remained unknown. François Nicolas-Louis Gosse (1787–1878) was a Historicist painter who used to work on theatre scenery. He was asked by Julienne to draw the figures *du naturel*. Due to the spherical surface, drawing either from a painting or an engraving would not result in a fully natural look. Thus, Gosse hired actors to pose and a tailor to produce their costumes. The above-mentioned written note registers that Gosse

had finished the compositions, after researching the heads, poses and costumes, based on tailored and actual clothes. Until further research is undertaken, or documents found, this note is the sole existing record testifying to his work on these vases, opportunely located and mentioned along with the first drawing.²⁰ In fact, having the final drawings presented on more than one sheet was, as Tamara Préaud has noted, a procedure that began at that time on Brongniart’s orders. “By using this method, and not producing a complete final drawing, it would have been virtually impossible to assess the overall effect produced by a proposed decorative scheme.”²¹ Two drawings for these vases are pictured in this article. From afar, the puzzle continues to grow.

Finally, the luxury of these vases also depends on their exquisite mounts. Produced by Christofle²² in

18 Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), Julienne, L., Lithographe, “Invitation au vernissage de l’Exposition des Produits des Manufactures Royales. [...]”: [estampe], Recueil. De Vinck Collection. *Un siècle d’histoire de France par l’estampe, 1770-1870*. Vol. 105 (pieces 13271–13414), Monarchie de Juillet, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53013787n/f1.item.zoom#>

19 MNS, Archives, Carton Pb II, liasse I, dossier Vases.

20 These fundamental documents remained unrelated to the actual works of art in 1997, as the vases had not yet been published with an image, nor were they made available in any database. The second drawing with the micro-architecture and figure (MNS, inv. 2012.1.1860), now presented in context, only resurfaced in 2011. It was most fortunately bought by the archives and made available on the Joconde database.

21 Tamara Préaud, “Décoration for a Vase, 1846 called *Vase Oeuf*”, in *The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory: Alexandre Brongniart and the Triumph of Art and Industry 1800–1847*, edited by Derek E. Ostergard (New York: The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts / Yale University Press, 1997), Exhibition catalogue.

22 I am indebted to Isabel Tissot and Manuel Lemos at Archeofactu for detecting the marks while restoring the mounts on these vases in 2010 and to Teresa Maranhas, curator of silver and jewellery at the Palace, for their prompt identification.

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Fig. 4

Celebrities of the 15th and 16th centuries

(Vase (I), detail).

National Palace of Ajuda (inv. no. 3960).

Photo: © Luisa Oliveira / DGPC.

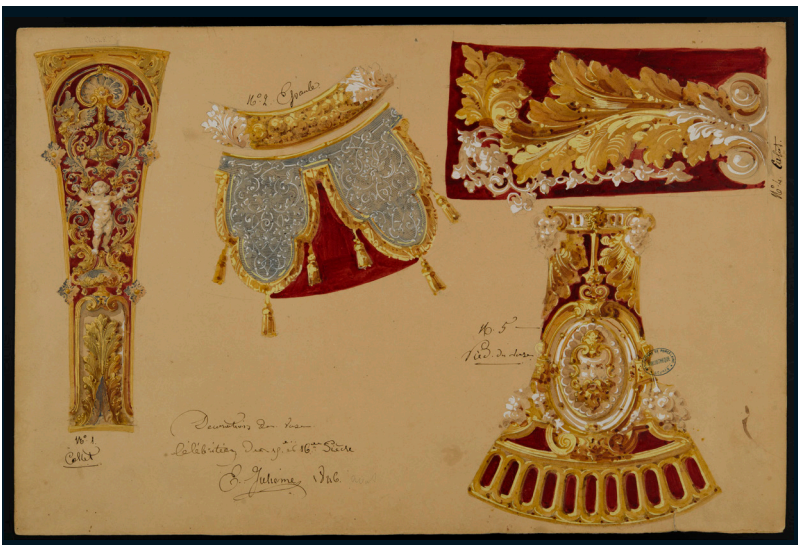


Fig. 5

Decorative details from the vases *Celebrities of the 15th and 16th centuries*.

Musée national de Céramique (inv. no. 2012.1.1859).

Photo © Sèvres - Manufacture et musée nationaux, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Manзара.



Fig. 6

Decorative details from the vases *Celebrities of the 15th and 16th centuries*.

Musée national de Céramique (inv. no. 2012.1.1860).

Photo © Sèvres - Manufacture et musée nationaux, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Manзара.

gilt bronze, these elevate the vases to a higher category. They not only enrich the artworks but also allow the vases to rotate, which obviously helps when viewing the whole sequence of figures, allowing the owner to display the vases next to a wall, if wished. Both Neoclassical and neo-Rococo, the *têtes de béli-er* (rams' heads), clearly inspired by rhytons from 5 BC (exquisite ceremonial cups in the shape of animal heads), are paired with scrolls of delicate foliage, grapes and small birds.²³

Undeniably, the pair of *Celebrities* vases is representative of Sèvres production of this type, proud masterpieces designed for a luxurious interior. Enduring the passage of time and trends, conveying the French Renaissance through its heroes, gold and colours, they display French ceramic and painting techniques at their best. They are a precious gift fit for the King of Portugal. //

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my debt of gratitude to the Sèvres Archives, in particular Antoinette Fay-Hallé and Tamara Préaud, for the documents located and sent to the Palace of Ajuda in 2002 following the research undertaken there by Isabel Silveira Godinho, then director of the palace. I am especially grateful to Maria José Tavares for the invitation to present this paper and to Hugo Xavier, Hugo Miguel Crespo, Pedro Flor, Teresa Maranhas, Ana Paula Rebelo Correia and Inês Ferro for our fruitful discussions on this matter.

23 A similar model of mount was used on a pair of flowery “vases-œuf” dating from 1849, in deposit at the Musée d’Orsay (GML 3293 2).

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An “Encyclopedia” of styles: Russian artistic metal objects from the State Historical Museum Collection

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ABSTRACT

The State Historical Museum in Moscow, the largest national museum in Russia, is celebrating its 150th anniversary. The museum building in the Red Square, in the center of Moscow, was built in the Russian Revival style as a symbol of national Russian identity. Its collection of 19th-century artistic metal objects provides the opportunity to observe the development and evolution of the Revival style and Historicism as vivid evidence of the historical mentality of the time.

While it is possible to determine several periods in the Historicist style in Russian architecture and applied arts, it is difficult to state the exact time limits of any one style. Many styles existed at the same time and it is only possible to talk about the predominance of one or other. In the 1830s, Russian bronze and cast-iron foundries began to produce applied objects in Neo-Gothic and Neo-Chinoiserie styles alongside Neo-Renaissance and Neo-Classical ones. At the same time, new national trends appeared in Russian architecture and applied arts. Russian style was intended to be an expression of national identity and was based on a stylized version of traditional art comprising Byzantine and 16th-century Moscow art forms and motifs. From 1850 to the 1870s, artistic metal objects were decorated with the folk art motifs, embroidery and carving associated with traditional 17th-century art. A unique example of this is the cockerel-shaped samovar made especially for the 1873 Vienna Universal Exhibition. Artistic Russian metal objects from the last quarter of the 19th century demonstrate the further development of the Russian style as a local branch of Historicism, based on traditional images.

An “Encyclopedia” of styles: Russian artistic metal objects from the State Historical Museum Collection

Ludmila Dementieva

The State Historical Museum in Moscow, the largest national museum in Russia, is celebrating its 150th anniversary. The museum building in the Red Square, in the center of Moscow, was built in the Russian Revival style as a symbol of national Russian identity.

There are about 60,000 items in the museum's Metalwork Department dating from the 16th century to the present day. The wide variety of objects, their use, the place and nature of their production, and the diversity of styles make it possible to explore different aspects of the development of the history of artistic metal.

The collection of 19th-century artistic metal objects provides the opportunity to observe the development and evolution of the Revival style or Historicism as vivid evidence of the historical mentality of the time.

In 1842, the famous Russian literary critic and publicist Vissarion Belinsky wrote:

Our age is primarily a historical one. Historical contemplation has powerfully and irresistibly penetrated all spheres of contemporary con-

*sciousness. History became the general basis for and only condition of any living knowledge: without it, the apprehension of art and philosophy would be impossible. Moreover, art itself has now become primarily historical in character.*¹

These words precisely express the heightened sense of time and increased interest in the historical past.

The earliest item in the new style in the collection is a mantel clock with a cast iron case in the form of a Gothic portal (fig. 1). The form of the case is a brilliant example of the Gothic Revival style—the romantic movement in architecture and applied art inspired by medieval design.

The base stands on four rectangular legs and is decorated with delicate onlay ornamental motives with Gothic decor on the arches, cruciferous flowers, violets, crabs, and pinnacles. The stylized portal is emphasized by a gilded arch and lace-like grate. Above it there is a seven-petaled rosette with falling leaves, emphasized by gilding, and a clock dial plate with roman numerals. The turreted arch-topped case is cast with “poppy-head” finials. The compo-

¹ Vissarion G. Belinsky, Руководство к всеобщей истории. Сочинение Фридриха Лоренца (“Guide to World History”), composition by Friedrich Lorenz, in V. G. Belinsky, *Collected Works*, vol. 4, articles, reviews and notes from March 1841 to March 1842 (Moscow: Fiction Publishing House, 1979), 390.

sition is flanked by two columns with pinnacles, and the surface of the case is painted green, which is partly preserved, contrasting with the gilded details.

The clock's movement is French and typical of the 1830s. The form of the case appears to have been copied from a French bronze clock in the Gothic Revival style.

On the rear of the base there is an inscription in Cyrillic letters: “Отлито на Олонецкихъ завод: 1834 года” (“Cast at the Olonetsky Works 1834”). Inscriptions like this on Russian cast-iron pieces are very rare: it refers not only to the clock's place of production but also to the date it was made. The cast is of very high quality, with all of the details having been thoroughly embossed.

The Olonetsky Works was a group of foundries in Karelia in the northwest of Russia. Interesting and very important documents concerning the history of the production of the clock were recently found in the Karelia archive.² In May 1833, the director of the Olonetsky Works, Robert Armstrong, received a letter from Alexander Fullon of the Russian Mint, former director of the Olonetsky Works. The letter contained an order for 24 cast cases for table clocks: 12 in green

with gilded bronze and 12 in black. The letter was accompanied by a model of the case required. The main customers for the order were two master clock-makers from St. Petersburg: Philip Ketterer and the famous Henry Mozer. The production process was started in three months under the strict supervision of the customers. According to the records, it was prohibited to transfer the models to any other iron workshop, and, in reality, no examples exist of these models cast at other Russian foundries.

The first examples of the series were successful, and, as a result, other models were added. In July 1833, 72 cases were ordered based on three models: 18 examples of each to be painted in matt black and 6 in green. Thanks to the records, it is known that all production of these cast-iron clock cases finished in 1837 due to changes in fashion. Over four years, a total of 290 cast-iron cases of different types were made, a significant number that indicates high demand for products made in this new style. Unfortunately, at present, museum collections only possess single copies of clocks like these made by the Olonetsky Works.

These mantel clocks often coexisted in interiors with a similar four-candle candelabrum with a screen (miracle) (fig. 2). The branches of this type of candelabrum are attached to a rod and can be adjusted in height. There is a slotted ornament in the Gothic style between the candlesticks. The rod is mounted on a round pedestal with relief armatures

2 A. M. Pashkov, Британские специалисты на Олонецких горных заводах в конце XVIII — начале XIX вв. // Экономическая история. Обзорение (“British Specialists at the Olonetsky Mining Plants in the Late XVIII—Early XIX centuries,” in *Economic History Review*), vol. 12, issue 35, ed. L. I. Borodkina (Moscow: Publishing House of the Moscow State University, 2006), 138–141.

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Fig. 1

Portal-shaped mantel clock

Russia. Olonetsky Works. 1834.

Cast iron, steel, bronze; chased, patinated, gilded.

41 x 18 x 10.5 cm

ГИМ 114443/1,2 МЖ 11632/1-2 ГК.6909022

and knight's armor. In the cylindrical screen behind the glass, there are watercolor drawings with romantic landscapes and castles. When the candle is lit, the screen is illuminated from the inside and seems to come to life.

This type of chamber lighting began to appear from the end of the 18th century, and the production of candlesticks with a screen in the Gothic style began in the 1840s in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

The watercolor drawings on the screens were produced by both professional and amateur artists, who were often the customers for these items.

From the 1830s, the tendency towards mechanization began to manifest itself clearly in the production of artistic bronze items. Instead of labor-intensive casting and embossing, the method of stamping on sheet metal was used in the decoration.

In [figure 3](#), the decorative ornamentation on the stand of the red glass vase with a scalloped edge was made by knurling, a technique characteristic of Moscow bronze workshops. The decorative relief on the stand was made by steel roller, which pressed the elements deep into the surface.

The stand features a decorative ornamental band in the form of grape leaves enclosed in smooth festoons. A spectacular color contrast is achieved by the subtle gilding of the protruding ribs of the body and the scalloped edge of the deep red-colored glass. The shape of the vase is similar to some items in the Gothic set made at the Imperial Glass Factory

in 1832 for the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg.

The glass section of the vase, which is easy to remove, is fixed to the base by means of internal protrusions. On the smooth bottom of the stand, there is a stamp in a rectangular frame with the Russian letters “МПП” (“MPP”). This is the trademark of the Moscow master Peter Petrov, whose workshop was founded in 1824. The range of products produced by this workshop, which were first shown in Moscow at the First Russian Exhibition of Products and Industry (1831), consisted of candlesticks, cup holders, ink devices, and bowls. The objects from Petrov's workshop were distinguished by a particular virtuosity in the execution of knurled details, which are all finely and clearly delineated.³

In parallel with the Neo-Gothic style, Russian bronze casters also made objects in chinoiserie. The simultaneous use of different artistic forms and elements from various artistic styles was a characteristic feature of the era of Historicism.

A rare example of this is the ink set in the form of a Chinese sailing ship with two Chinese figures, a bell under the roof of a Chinese-style pavilion, and two glass inkwells ([fig. 4](#)). Various materials and techniques were used in the manufacture of this

3 Ludmila A. Dementieva, *Секреты московской бронзы. // «Антиквариат, предметы искусства и коллекционирования»* (“Secrets of Moscow Bronze,” *Antiques, Art and Collectibles*), no. 5 (7) (Moscow, 2003), 46.

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Fig. 2

Four-candle candelabrum with screen (miracle)

St. Petersburg. 1840s.

Bronze, glass; cast, chased, gilded, painted.

56.5 x 15.5 x 13 cm

ГИМ 62188 БР 316 ГК.29548774

object. The sail is made of thin gilded copper sheet, while the ship’s dragon-shaped hull, bell, and figures are cast and covered with polychrome painting. The painting on the stand depicts a stormy sea. It is presumed that these polychromatic objects were made at Peter Goede’s workshop in St. Petersburg.

While it is possible to determine several periods in the Historicist style in Russian architecture and applied arts, it is difficult to state the exact time limits of any one style. Many styles existed at the same time and it is only possible to talk about the predominance of one or other style.

The decorative bronze objects from the late 1840s to early 1850s clearly demonstrate a steady tendency to repeat the artistic elements of the 17th and 18th centuries. Since Baroque and Rococo elements are combined together, it is sometimes difficult to determine which stylistic element is predominant.

Items like this were included in the range of products offered by the leading bronze foundries in St. Petersburg and Moscow, including one of the most renowned: the St. Petersburg foundry of Felix Chopin. The history of this foundry dates back to the beginning of the 19th century when, in 1805, it was opened by the French founder and sculptor Alexander Guérin in St. Petersburg. The foundry produced expensive gilded bronzes—clocks, lamps, and candelabra—for the Russian nobility and aristocracy. All wares were cast over French models, which were sent to Russia by Parisian founder and sculptor Julien Chopin. His

son, Félix Chopin, moved to St. Petersburg in 1838 and around 1841 acquired Guérin’s workshop, which was on the verge of bankruptcy.

A keen entrepreneur, Chopin soon revitalized the business by moving to new premises and employing new French, Finnish, and Russian craftsmen. However, the real secret to his success was a talent for spotting and responding to changing fashions. Through high technical proficiency and progressive new methods, he achieved a leading position within the Russian artistic and decorative bronze industry.

One of the items produced by the foundry in our collection is a mantel clock in the “French Rococo” style (fig. 5), which was made between the late 1840s and early 1850s. The case is decorated with rocaille curls, acanthus stems and leaves, flower garlands, and the figures of two birds at the top. On either side of the dial is a putto sitting on scrolling curls, which appear to be the bodies of two dragons whose open mouths are facing upwards. The bronze surface is galvanically gilded. Chopin was one of the first to apply galvanic casting and gilding in the late 1840s. The clock dial bears the signature “F-x CHOPIN A S-t PETERSBURG” and the mechanism was made by the French company Pons.⁴

4 О. N. Melnikova, Мельникова О.Н. Из истории часов в России. XVII – начало XX века (*On the History of Watches in Russia. XVII – The Beginning of the XX century*) (Moscow: State Historical Museum, 2016), 117.

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Fig. 3

Vase with scalloped edge

Moscow. Peter Petrov workshop. 1830s-1840s.

Bronze, glass; stamped, chased, gilded.

14 x 16 x 12.5 cm

ГИМ 110924 БР 2902 ГК.28700176



Fig. 4

Ink set in the form of a Chinese sailing vessel with pagoda, bell, and figures

St. Petersburg. Peter Goede workshop. 1840s.

Bronze, copper, glass; cast, stamped, gilded, painted.

40 x 35 x 15 cm

ГИМ 64893/1 БР 478/1 ГК.14546787

Just like Western Europe, Russian artists began to rethink national cultural heritage in the 19th century. As a result of studying ancient Russian decorative techniques and combining them with new technological processes, the so-called Russian style began to develop. This was intended to be a reflection of the expression of national identity and was based on traditional art. The evolution of the national Russian style took place at several levels, in accordance with the aesthetic views of different social groups.

From the 1850s to 1870s, artistic metal objects were decorated with motifs associated with the folk art, embroidery, carving, and traditional architecture of the 16th and 17th centuries. A rare example of this is an ink set with two inkstands (fig. 6). Made of brass, several of its individual elements are cast from bronze. The composition depicts a traditional peasant's yard with a “fence”, whose design uses the motifs of traditional Russian embroidery. In the center of the background of the stand, there is a vertical pediment in the form of a stylized crown from a traditional Russian house. The surface of the pediment is engraved to resemble the logs of a wooden building. The central composition is formed by openwork images of two birds on either side of a “tree” with three branches. In their beaks they hold a decorative element surmounted by a crown. The design features stylized images of flowers, roosters,

and horse heads. The inkwell is square in shape with a removable lid and a handle consisting of four stylized bird wings.

It should be noted that items like these were entirely original and, as a rule, only a single example was ever made.

In the items made in the 1860s–1870s, an important stylistic element was the ornamentation. A characteristic new method of decorating products in the Russian style was to nickel plate bronze. In Russia, bronze nickel plating began to be used around the mid-1870s on Russian-style products made at the famous Nikolai Shtange foundry in St. Petersburg. In 1876, this foundry showed items of this kind at the Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia.

Nickel plating to bronze was fashionable until the end of the 1880s. Nickel could only be applied to a flat surface, so the type of decorative elements used in the Russian style were ideally suited to the process. Figure 7 shows a unique example of the Russian style—a samovar in the form of a rooster—made especially for the Vienna Universal Exhibition in 1873. Shaped like a ball and with a cock's head tap, the samovar is supported by two paws and a tail and has a bone tap key with a slot. An inscription in stylized Cyrillic reads: “Самоваръ кипить уходитъ не велить/ въ память Всемирной Венской выставки

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Fig. 5

Mantel clock with figures of two putti

St. Petersburg. Felix Chopin foundry. 1840s-1850s.

Bronze, enamel, glass; cast, chased, gilded.

58 x 49 x 22 cm

ГИМ 114399/1 БР 3052/1 ГК.5353631



Fig. 6

Russian-style ink set

Russia, St. Petersburg (?). 1870s–1880s.

Bronze, brass, enamel; cast, gilded, silvered; openwork.

48 x 36.5 x 25.8 cm

ГИМ 109881/1 БР 2834/1 ГК.24460824

1873; Где есть чай там и подъ елью рай” (“The samovar is boiling; it does not tell you to leave. In memory of the 1873 Vienna Universal Exhibition. Where there is tea there is paradise even under the spruce”).⁵

The artistic metal objects in our collection were made by various workshops in Russia. None of these

workshops specialized in manufacturing objects in just one style. Neo-Gothic, neo-Chinoiserie, neo-Rococo, and the Russian style were not independent; they were all part of the same Historicist movement, which was the result of independent creativity based on the experiences of world culture as a whole. //

⁵ L.A. Petrova, *Самовары XVIII–XX веков в собрании Исторического музея: каталог* (*Samovars of the XVIII–XX Centuries in the Collection of the Historical Museum*) (Moscow: State Historical Museum, 2020), 284–285, exhibition catalog.

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Fig. 7

Rooster-shaped samovar for the 1873 Vienna Universal Exhibition

Russia. 1873.

Copper, iron, bone, glass; cast, stamped.

35 x 28 x 37 cm

ГИМ 96120/1 ММ 13013/1 ГК.3240725

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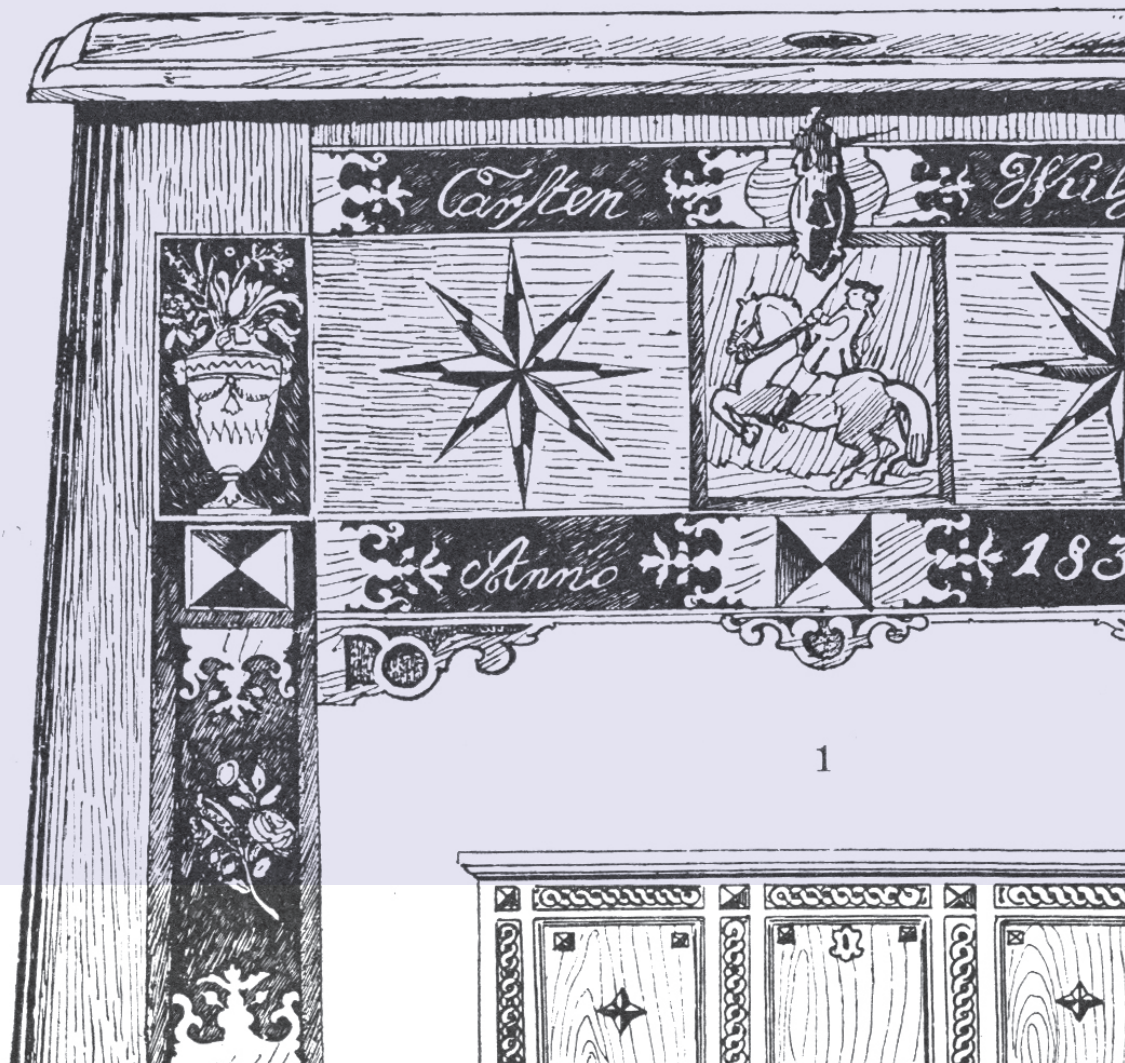
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The Rural Revival around 1900: Vernacular Aesthetics in European Decorative Arts between Historicism and Art Nouveau

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ABSTRACT

The Decorative Arts developed an intensified interest in peasant life and its artifacts the moment the continuity of these was endangered through industrialization and urbanization. In addition, 19th-century Europe witnessed the spread of nation building from Scandinavia to the Ottoman Empire which resulted in the search for national styles. This process was fueled by international competition and comparison at the World's Fairs, where the decorative arts played an important role in the "nationalization of culture". After several historical revivals like the Gothic Revival—claimed as a genuine national style by Great Britain, France and Germany at the same time—the decorative arts sought supposedly more authentic sources of inspiration and identity. They found it in the traditional forms of folk art, which were on the verge of being lost or, in most cases, had already disappeared.

This paper will show that the Rural Revival in the decades around 1900 was a Europe-wide phenomenon, which stretched from the "Handarbetets Vänner" in Sweden to the "Volkskunstbewegung" in Germany and from the Arts and Crafts Movement in England to the Neo-Russian Style of Abramtsevo near Moscow and the Zakopane Style in Hungary. All of these movements were connected by their veneration for national or even regional rural heritage and its vernacular aesthetics. With its adaptation of often geometrical ornaments, simple but solid buildings and decorating techniques, and outdated furniture styles associated with folk art, the Rural Revival influenced both Historicism and Art Nouveau alike.

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The adaptation or “revival” of vernacular aesthetics began at a point when rural artifacts were in danger of vanishing due to industrialization, migration from the land, and increasing mass production.¹ However, a rich and diverse vernacular material culture could still be found on the European continent in the late-19th century when nations were being built. In Germany, an example of this would be the Vierlande region in Lower Saxony, populated by a relatively wealthy farming community, but examples also existed in Russia, Hungary, and other countries, where a significant proportion of the population earned its living from the land and livestock and still maintained at least part of its traditional material culture.

The rural sphere had already begun to interest painters such as the Barbizon school in the second half of the 19th century and, later, the Impressionists, who depicted laboring agricultural workers in a world that was extremely different from the urban cosmos, where so many aspects of life were rapidly changing. The countryside became a seemingly constant and therefore reliable world that served as a source of escapism from the overwhelming modernity of electricity, mass media, transportation, and the emancipation of the citizen or bourgeoisie.

Museums began to collect and present manifestations of folk art as it was perceived by students and artists alike. The British Arts and Crafts movement centered around John Ruskin (1819–1900) and William Morris (1834–1896) was one of the first to acknowledge the value of folk art for contemporary artistic expression struggling with industrialization and urbanization. In *The Claims of Decorative Art*, Walter Crane (1845–1915) demanded in 1892 that “We want a vernacular in art.”² The rural sphere, therefore, offered a source of inspiration for the decorative arts while also becoming a motif itself. The idea of authenticity and the unity of life and art were also beginning to appeal to artists and a clientele seeking meaning and uniqueness.

The World Fairs presented an opportunity to show vernacular art as a distinguishing feature of nations in their attempts to prove their superiority, for example Germany, France, Russia, and Britain, or to show their newly found national identity, for example Hungary, Finland, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. To a certain extent, this display was naturally intended as a tourist attraction, but peasant houses and rural artifacts also served the purpose of developing Romantic nationalism aimed at exploring, collecting,

¹ Renate Itzelsberger, *Volkskunst und Hochkunst. Ein Versuch zur Klärung der Begriffe* (Munich: Mäander, 1983).

² Walter Crane, *The Claims of Decorative Art* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1892), 15.

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and showcasing nations' histories and origins.³

A complete and final definition of the terms "rural art", "vernacular art," and "folk art" is almost impossible.⁴ Although "rural" roughly refers to a non-urban space, "vernacular" to indigenous culture, and "folk" to a group of anonymous producers with no art training, all of these terms are interwoven and share an association with the idyllic, traditional, simple, and true. Nonetheless, a closer look quickly reveals the complexity of the meanings: Were there really isolated peasants in the countryside creating and decorating objects only for their own common use or special occasions? Were the producers not craftsmen rather than laypersons, and to what extent was the design of the artifacts influenced by the so-called "fine or higher arts"?

Research on the adaptation of vernacular art has mainly focused on architecture and the fine arts, as exemplified by the international conference "Vernacular Art in Central Europe" in 1997⁵ and the publi-

cation *Vernacular Modernism. Heimat, Globalization, and the Built Environment*.⁶ In 2020, the Finnish National Gallery edited a collection of essays titled *European Revivals – From Dreams of a Nation to Places of Transnational Exchange*.⁷ In late 2021, the Technical University of Vienna organized a workshop called "Constructing the Regional. Forms and functions of Heimatschutz, reform and vernacular architecture."⁸ The reception of folk art by the avant-garde, for example by the Expressionist group *Der Blaue Reiter*, has been studied on several occasions.⁹ Research on the European adaptation of rural art in the Historicist and Art Nouveau decorative arts has been less

3 Javier Gimeno Martínez and Joep Leerssen, "§13. Dress, design," in *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, Volume 1, ed. Joep Leerssen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 95.

4 Adam Milobedzki, "On Vernacularism," in *Vernacular Art in Central Europe*, ed. Jacek Purchla (Kraków: International Cultural Center, 2001); Bernward Deneke, "Volkskunst. Leistungen und Defizite eines Begriffs," *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 15 (1992).

5 Purchla, *Vernacular Art in Central Europe*.

6 *Vernacular Modernism. Heimat, Globalization, and the Built Environment*, ed. Maiken Umbach and Bernd Hüppauf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). See also: *Vernakuläre Moderne. Grenzüberschreitungen in der Architektur um 1900. Das Bauernhaus und seine Aneignung*, ed. Anita Aigner (Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2010).

7 *European Revivals – From Dreams of a Nation to Places of Transnational Exchange*, ed. Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff and Riitta Ojanperä (Helsinki: Finnish National Gallery, 2020).

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9 Ursula Glatzel, *Zur Bedeutung der Volkskunst beim Blauen Reiter* (Stuttgart 1975); Elina Knorpp, "Vasily Kandinsky. Ethnography, folk art, and Der Blaue Reiter," in *Folklore & Avantgarde. The Reception of Popular Traditions in the Age of Modernism*, ed. Katia Baudin and Elina Knorpp (Munich: Hirmer, 2020).

intense and has mostly been done by ethnology,¹⁰ but in 2022 a conference by the Design History Society will look at “‘Folk’ Cultures in Everyday Objects.”¹¹

In the decorative arts around 1900, folk art elements and vernacular aesthetics were used by artists to create a background for identification and something new out of the old and nearly forgotten by covering aspects such as materiality, technique, ornament, and archetypes. Some adaptations were close to their clearly identifiable models, while others merely captured the spirit of rural, vernacular, and folk art. In Sweden, the “Handarbetets Vänner” (Friends of Craftsmanship) have aimed to promote the development of the quality of Swedish textiles since 1874.¹² The association has collected and copied traditional samples of weaving and embroidery that could serve as a source of inspiration for their creative processes (fig. 1),¹³ influencing various simi-

lar projects in other countries aimed at reviving the richness of their own traditional ornaments and artisanal techniques.

Justus Brinckmann (1843–1915), founding director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Hamburg, was one of the most active promoters of the rebirth of forgotten techniques in Germany. He initiated, for example, the revival of leather embossing in Hamburg and was also a fervent collector of Japanese art.¹⁴ When Japan opened its borders in the mid-19th century, its applied art gained many admirers in Western countries. Japanese folk art was regarded as the height of accomplishment and, consequently, critics and artists yearned for a German folk art of similar vitality, originality, and strength, without copying Japanese motives like Japonism.¹⁵ Brinckmann not only collected Japanese art but also rural art from the regions around Hamburg such as Vierlande and Alte Land. Some of the artifacts were displayed in the museum, which also served as a study collection for the Arts and Crafts School housed in the same building.¹⁶

10 Bernward Deneke, “Die Entdeckung der Volkskunst für das Kunstgewerbe,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* 60, no. 1 (1964).

11 Design History Society: “‘Folk’ Cultures in Everyday Objects”, November 14–17, 2022.

12 Ingeborg Becker, “Schönheit für Alle – Kunst für Alle?” in *“Schönheit für alle”. Jugendstil in Schweden*, ed. Ingeborg Becker (Berlin: Bröhan-Museum, 2005), 17.

13 Johan Knutsson, *I “hemtrefnadens” tid. Allmoges, nationalromantik och konstnärligt nyskapande i arkitektur, möbler och inredningar 1890–1930* (Stockholm: Nordiska museets förlag 2010), 10.

14 David Klemm, *Das Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. Band 1: Von den Anfängen bis 1945* (Hamburg: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe 2004), 224.

15 Oskar Schwindrazheim, *Hie Volkskunst!* (Bremerhaven: Chr. G. Tienken 1892), 14.

16 Klemm, *Das Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg*, 172–177.

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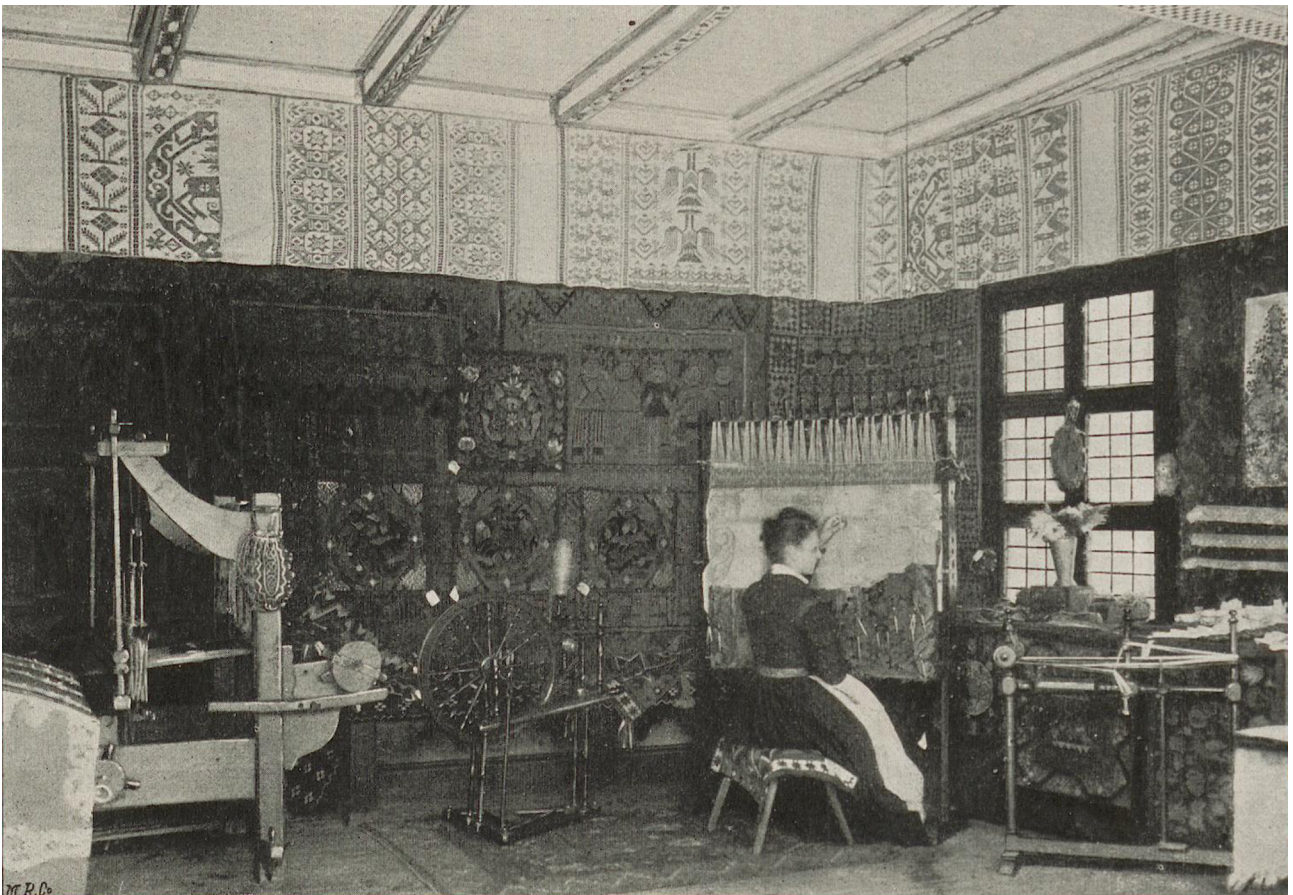


Fig. 1

Weaving School of the Handarbetets Vänner, Stockholm, 1897.

Photo from *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* 2, 1898, p. 378.

One of the students of the Hamburg School was Oskar Schwindrazheim (1865–1952), who in 1889 founded the “Verein für Volkskunst” (Association for Folk Art) that lay at the origins of the “Volkskunstbewegung” (Folk Art Movement) in Germany.¹⁷ The movement—with Schwindrazheim as one of its central voices—aimed to revive traditional German folk art and bring it up to date. Historicism and Art Nouveau were seen as international and therefore non-unique styles, which, especially in the decorative arts genre, could destroy all truthful artistic expression through mass production, eclecticism, and the work of epigones. Despite this contemporary judgement, the revival of vernacular art in the decorative arts was witnessed both in Historicism and Art Nouveau, more in terms of reproduction in the former and as a starting point for reinterpretation in the latter.

In the late-19th century, Schwindrazheim designed furniture that adapted the specific characteristics of the material culture of different rural regions in northern Germany, such as Wilstermarsch, the region around Schleswig, Vierlande, and Friesland (fig. 2). For the chairs, chests, and cupboard—the illustration shows a “Hörnschapp”, especially made for the corner of a room—Schwindrazheim “updated”

the outlines, decoration, and construction of vernacular furniture to create his own artistic language. His Vierlande-style chest bears similarities to a historical chest dating back to 1832. The sketch in figure 3 of an “old folk art” artifact—as opposed to the desired “new folk art”—was also drawn by Schwindrazheim, who not only worked as a designer but also undertook numerous study trips to rural areas of Germany. He published the results of his travels in the book *Deutsche Bauernkunst* (German Peasant Art) in 1904, which was one of the first of its kind in Germany.¹⁸

Furniture from Vierlande, which Schwindrazheim often visited, was known for its artful inlay work that covered the surfaces of the pieces with flowers, writings, and ornaments. It can easily be seen how Schwindrazheim adapted and developed the outlines of the chest and how he varied the positioning of the ornamented areas. Chests had already fallen out of fashion by around 1900, because they could not offer the comfort and easy storage of a chest of drawers. Consequently, the heavy wooden chest as a type of furniture became a signifier of a rural past.

Apart from inlay work, woodcarving, wood burning, and colorful painting were traditional decorative techniques in vernacular furniture and therefore were not only used by Schwindrazheim but also by

17 Anna-Sophie Laug, *Oskar Schwindrazheim (1865–1952). Ein Künstler, Pädagoge und Kunstschriftsteller zwischen Tradition und Reform*, (Hamburg: Wallstein, 2020), 143.

18 Laug, *Oskar Schwindrazheim*, 351–352.

other designers who wanted to emphasize the vernacular character of their creations. Heavy joints and thick boards were intended to show the assumed craftsmanship and the uncomplicated construction of the pieces. These features should always be juxtaposed with the contemporary veneered furniture where the joints were consciously hidden and the underlying wood often had to look like precious mahogany, even though it was simple softwood. One example of an openly displayed, obviously simple, and decisively old-fashioned construction is the dining room designed by the Hungarian artist Ede Wigand-Thoroczkai (1869–1945) in 1906 in the “Hungarian Style” (fig. 4). For Hungary, which struggled against the loss of its national identity under Habsburg Monarchy, the development of a national Hungarian style was an aesthetic coping strategy.

However, plain or traditionally decorated wood were not the only items judged to be close to a rural way of life. The textiles and ceramics that were often produced in farming households also had vernacular connotations. Around 1900, several regions in Europe encouraged a revival of hand weaving, motivated principally by the Norwegian Gerhard Munthe (1849–1929). The Norwegian textile artist Frida Hansen (1855–1931) was the most prominent figure in rediscovering and spreading the ancient weaving techniques and was consulted when plans were proposed in northern Germany to renew the tradition

of folk weaving art, which had unfortunately already been completely lost.¹⁹ This explains why, at the beginning, the Scherrebek Weaving Mill used teachers, looms, and even wool from Norway. The original aim of the project was to strengthen the poor German regions near the Danish border, both financially and morally. This meant supporting the German population against the Danish, since Prussia feared that the region might decide to become part of Denmark (which happened nonetheless). Nevertheless, the Scherrebek Weaving Mill was very successful. Its tapestries were sold globally and its style was named “New Folk Art.” The artists’ colony in Gödöllő, near Budapest, Hungary, had similar aims to Scherrebek and founded its centerpiece weaving mill in 1904.²⁰ In contrast to Scherrebek, Gödöllő effectively managed to collect old Hungarian folk art, support rural artisans, and contribute to the development of a new Hungarian style.

The artists’ colony that concentrated most on the revival of folk art and is today the best researched

19 Brigitte Tietzel, “‘Hauch der heimischen Erde’” Die Rolle Friedrich Denekens für die Kunstwebschule in Scherrebek, in *Scherrebek. Wandbehänge des Jugendstils*, ed. Dorothee Bieske (Flensburg: Boyens & Co., 2002), 26–27.

20 Ilona Sármany-Parsons, “Der Aufbruch zur Moderne. Die ungarische Kunst und Wien 1890–1914,” in *Zeit des Aufbruchs. Budapest und Wien zwischen Historismus und Avantgarde*, ed. Wilfried Seipel (Milano: Skira 2003), 400.

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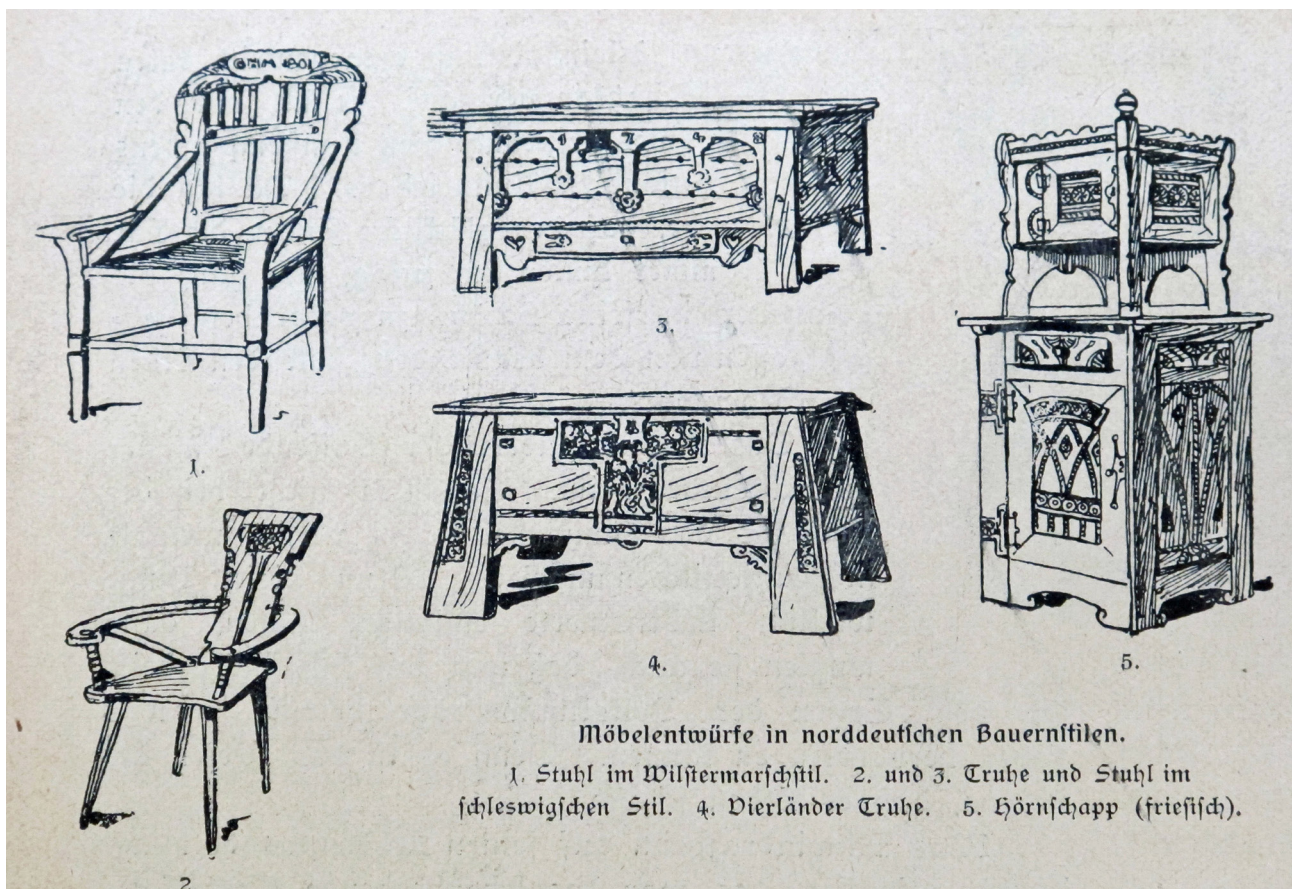


Fig. 2

Northern German peasant-style furniture designs by Oskar Schwindrazheim, ca. 1900–04.

Image from Gustav Brandes, "Bildende Künstler in Niedersachsen. IV. Schwindrazheim, in Niedersachsen. Illustrierte Halbmonatsschrift für niederdeutsches Leben, niederdeutsche Kultur, Kunst und Literatur, 10, 1904/05, No. 1, 6–14, p. 14.

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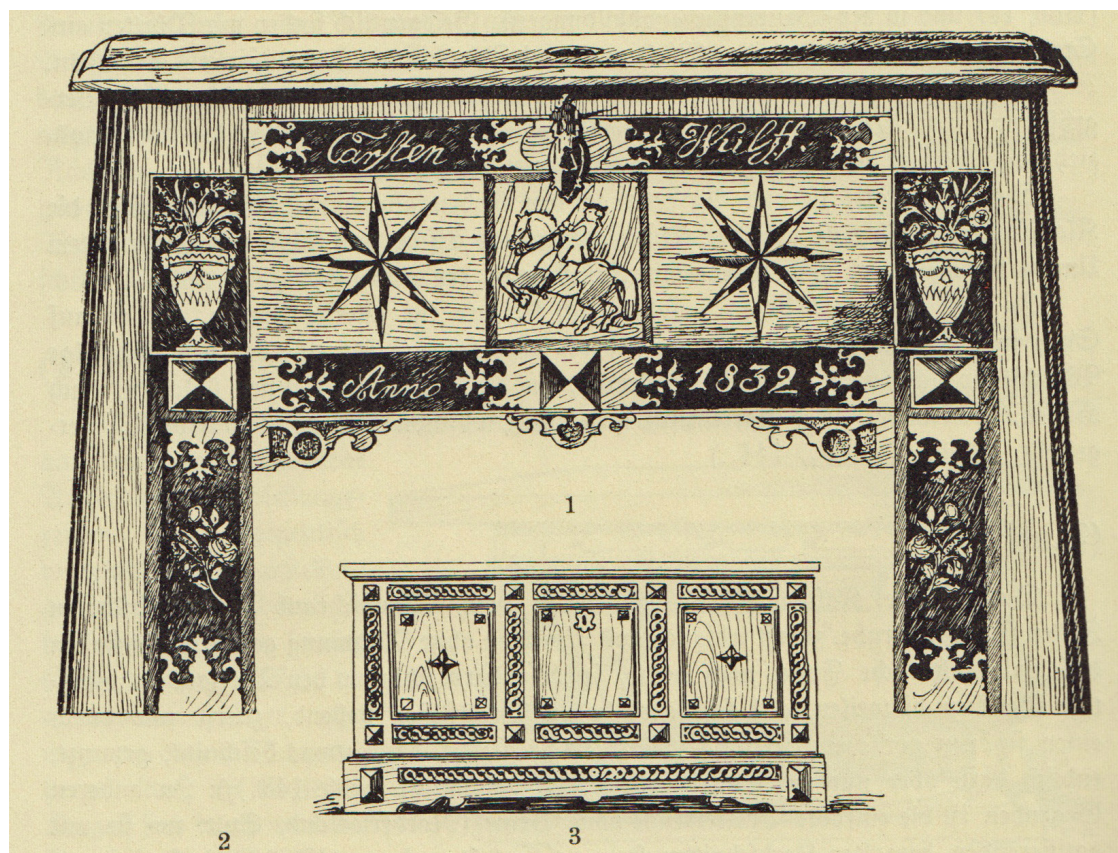


Fig. 3

An Oskar Schwindrazheim Vierlande-style chest with intarsia.

Image from Schwindrazheim's *Deutsche Bauernkunst*, p. 133.

on this aspect is Abramtsevo.²¹ Located in the vicinity of Moscow and owned by its patron Savva Mamontov (1841–1918), its artists, who included Mikhail Vrubel (1856–1910) and Jelena Polenova (1850–1898), dedicated themselves to national topics and Russian folk art to develop a Neo-Russian style. This style was promoted by the Russian Empire at every World Fair from 1900 onwards.²² While Vrubel's visual language tended toward the flowing and exuberant forms of Art Nouveau, Polenova's wall cabinets show a more Historicist approach to folk art, with its ornamentation, coloration, and traditional chip carving. This technique can also be found in Germany and Sweden and was a typical vernacular wood decoration, since it was easy to execute, offered many variations, and had great visual effect.

In Finland, the Belgian artist Alfred William Finch (1854–1930) focused the work of his studio–Iris–on reviving and renewing the Finnish decorative arts through craftsmanship and local rural traditions. While Finch's paintings can be associated with Poin-

tillism and Impressionism in style and technique, his bowls and vases show a distinct attachment to vernacular ceramics. He lived and worked in Porvoo/Borga, 50 km from Helsinki, in a region that is known for its ceramics and red soil, which Finch used for his artworks. He decorated them with apparently primitive scratch ornaments that left the red shards visible.²³ In this case, the connection to vernacular art mostly works with the material and the simple, but nonetheless Art Nouveau, ornamentation. Finch's ceramics were also shown at the World Fairs, together with furniture by the Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931), who also developed a contemporary interpretation of Finnish folk art in his works of decorative art.²⁴

By using agricultural scenes, traditional and non-illusionistic patterns, simple and regional materials, and old techniques and furniture types, the atmosphere of the vernacular was evoked. The products were mostly sold in cities and to a rich clientele seeking a purer, healthier, easier, and less corrupted lifestyle. Thus, they bought furniture offering a link

21 See: Wendy Salmond, *Arts and Crafts in Late Imperial Russia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996); Eleonora Paston, "Die Künstlerkolonie Abramzewo. Geburtsstätte des neorussischen Stils und Wiege der russischen Moderne," in *Russland 1900. Kunst und Kultur im Reich des letzten Zaren*, ed. Ralf Beil (Cologne: DuMont, 2008); Marina Dmitrieva: "Inventing Folk Art. Artist's Colonies in Eastern Europe and their Legacy," in von Bonsdorff/Ojanperä, *European Revivals*, 99.

22 Jelena Tschernewitsch, "Ausdruck eines neuen Russlands. Der neorussische Stil im Spannungsfeld von Folklore und nationaler Identität," in Beil, *Russland 1900*, 151.

23 Marja Supinen, "A. W. Finch et les ateliers 'Iris' 1897–1902," in A. W. Finch, 1854–1930, ed. Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (Brussels: Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 1992), 66.

24 Philippe Thiébaud, "Kalela: Künstlerdomizil oder Stätte für ein 'modernes' nationales Kunstgewerbe?" in *Überirdisch nordisch. Akseli Gallen-Kallela. Finnland im Geist der Moderne*, ed. Stiftung Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2012), 184 (illustration).

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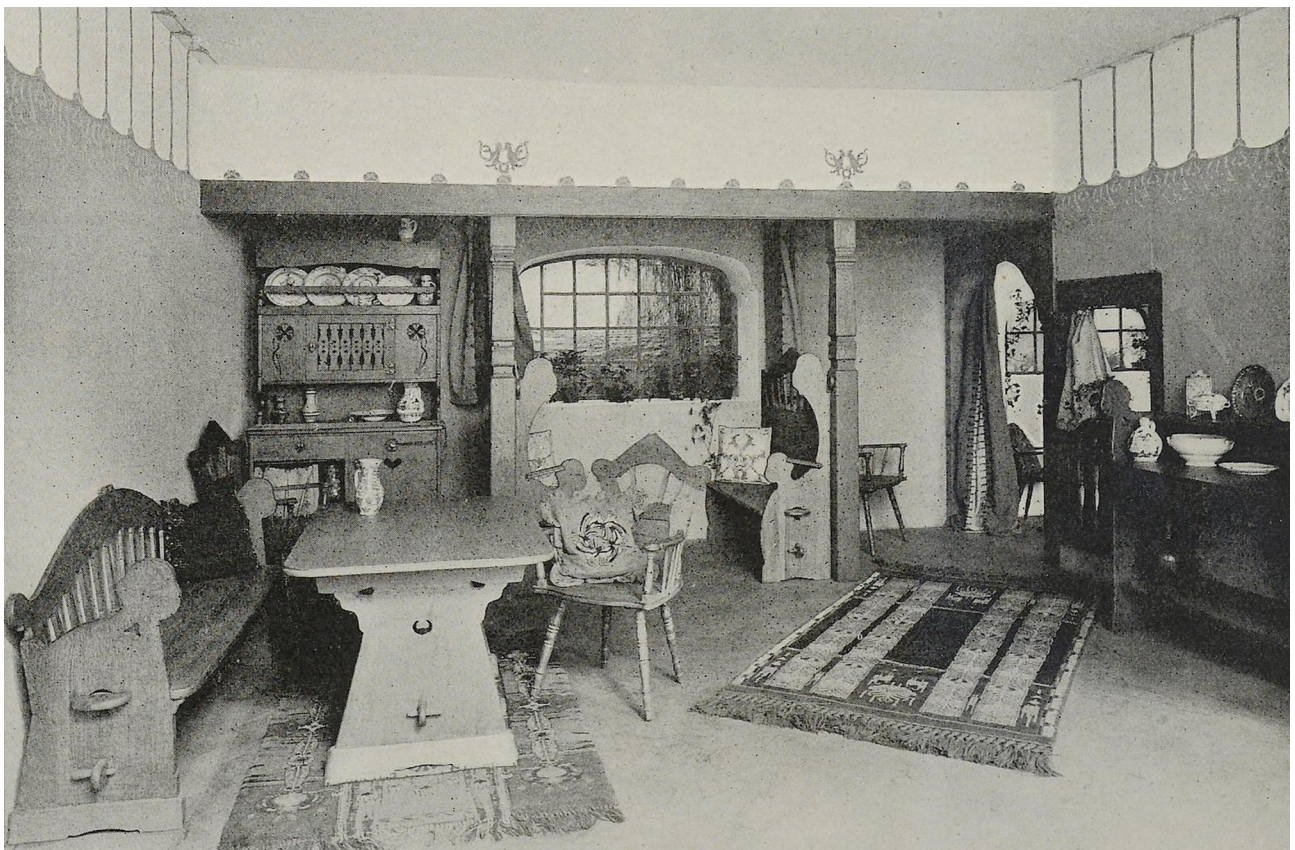


Fig. 1

Hungarian-style dining room by Eduard Wigand.

Photo from *The Studio* 40, 1907, No. 169, p. 242 (bottom).

to an idealized, simplified existence in the countryside. However, the farmers themselves were less than enamored with the vernacular style. Hermann Obrist (1862–1927), the famous Art Nouveau designer of the embroidery “Whiplash”, commented astutely: “Mr. Butcher does not want an artistically naïve peasant’s room, he wants a rococo salon.”²⁵

The vernacular revival, therefore, was only one aspect of the stylistic kaleidoscope offered to consumers by Historicism and Art Nouveau. Nonetheless, at the time of the “Nationalization of Culture” around 1900, folk art helped to answer questions of national and local identity, style, tradition, authenticity, and the value of heritage and craftsmanship. This is what Paul Greenhalgh has described as the “Creation of meaning.” He depicts the late-19th century as follows: “For a rare moment in its timeless history, the vernacular was at the core—not the pe-

riphery—of European culture.”²⁶ While Historicism sought vernacular motifs to adapt or copy, thus creating a link to a past that was on the verge of being lost, Art Nouveau turned its attention to folk art to find new inspiration rather than rehash the canon of styles that had been exploited by Historicism for several decades. //

25 “Der Herr Fleischermeister will keine künstlerisch-naïve Bauernstube, er will einen Rokokosalon.” Hermann Obrist, “Volkskunst?”, in *Neue Möglichkeiten in der Bildenden Kunst. Essays*, ed. Hermann Obrist (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1903), 84.

26 Paul Greenhalgh, “Alternative Histories,” in *Art Nouveau 1890–1914*, ed. Paul Greenhalgh (New York: Abrams, 2000), 47.

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